

Hafa Adai!

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**75¢**

IVA MAURIN

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres yesterday signed Executive Order 20-04 declaring the CNMI under a State of Significant Emergency and a State of Public Health Emergency at the Governor's Office conference room on Capitol Hill.

## STATE OF PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

- Two weeks of govt shutdown
- Activities with over 50 people prohibited
- 6 feet recommended social distancing
- Travel ban unless for health reasons to be in place

By IVA MAURIN  
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REPORTER

Following Guam's confirmation of three confirmed positive cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) last Sunday, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres yesterday signed Executive Order 20-04 declaring the CNMI under the State of Significant Emergency and a State of Public Health Emergency.

Under the directive, the Commonwealth Health Care Corp., Homeland Security & Emergency Management Office, Commonwealth Ports Authority, CNMI Customs Division, and the Marianas

Visitors Authority are to undertake immediate emergency COVID-19 containment measures.

The declaration is necessary to protect the health and

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## PSS extends class suspension to April

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA  
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REPORTER

The Public School System has extended the suspension of classes until March 31 because over 200 students and PSS staff have recently re-

turned from Guam and need to be self-quarantined.

In an interview with Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada, he said that after meeting with all school principals yesterday, they came to the decision to extend class

suspension until the end of March and resume classes on April 1.

Ada said, however, that suspension is still subject to change until PSS feels it's safe for students and staff to return to school.

"This coronavirus situation keeps changing so we're just dealing with what's here right now," he said.

Ada explained that the suspension extension is to provide ample time for stu-

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## NMC moves to online platforms

By JUSTINE NAUTA  
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College has suspended face-to-face classes yesterday on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota in an

effort to counter the three positive COVID-19 cases in Guam.

Majority of face-to-face classes will transition to online platforms on Wednesday, March 18. The remaining classes will transition by

March 23.

According to an email statement from Frankie Eliptico, NMC interim president, NMC has collaborators from all different levels of the community, that include administrators,

faculty members, department chairs, and students, in developing a course contingency plan to begin the transition of face-to-face classes to an online platform.

The college will be utilizing Moodle, a private website with online courses for educators [and trainers] to carry out learning goals, with Zoom, which is a video conferencing program that allows multiple

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**Activists call to oppose further NMI militarization. PAGE 2**

**Manglona postpones trial of Mayor Atalig, girlfriend anew. PAGE 3**

### INSIDE



#### BUSINESS

Rendezvous held its promotional opening last Friday amidst the economic downturn the CNMI is experiencing brought about by the coronavirus outbreak.

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#### WORLD

Meeting with friends, dining out, worshipping and other daily routines have nearly halted as nations take drastic steps to try to stop the coronavirus pandemic.

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#### LIFE & STYLE

Ticket sales plunged to their lowest levels in at least 20 years at North American movie theaters as the coronavirus pandemic led to one of Hollywood's worst weekends at the box office.

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## Local

## WITH TOURISM AT STAKE

## Activists call to oppose further NMI militarization

By IVA MAURIN  
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REPORTER

The House of Representatives chamber was filled to the brim last Friday, with members of the community providing comments after comments opposing the further militarization of the Northern Mariana Islands.

While met overwhelmingly by its supporters, the introduction of House Joint Resolution 21-8, which lobbies for Gov. Ralph DLG Torres to oppose any increase military presence or training in the CNMI, was also met with opposition by the Commonwealth Ports Authority, and with Torres himself calling the resolution “meaningless.”

In an interview with KSPN, Torres said that the administration has been prioritizing the environment, and that entertaining the military’s proposal does not mean the bombing of Pagan. The governor stressed that he is a staunch supporter protecting the Northern Islands.

Sophia Perez, who helped write the bill with Rep. Sheila



Babauta (Ind-Saipan), said “if no one stands up to the U.S. military officials who are framing the Marianas as a training ground... it is going to be like coronavirus all year round, every year.”

This is in response to comments that now is not the time to introduce the joint resolution, given issues surrounding the novel coronavirus (CO-

VID-19) outbreak.

“We need to talk about this resolution now, when we can see clearly what happens when tourists stop coming... We are currently learning firsthand what our home looks like with no tourists. No tourists means, for many of us, no school on Friday, no at our paychecks, and maybe no job at all.”

According to Perez, the

resolution points out that it is basically impossible to simultaneously be both a tourism destination and a military training area.

#### Contrary to the covenant

The U.S. Navy’s actions and intentions are not only contrary to the intent of the Covenant of the CNMI in political union with the United States, but also poses an existential threat to the survival of the Marianas as a people.

This, according to Northern Marianas Descent Corp. president John Gonzalez who also said that the actions are “illegal and pose an existential threat to our survival as a people, our dignity, our sacred, cultural homeland, and our entire community.”

Section 806 (a) of the Covenant Agreement states that “The United States will continue to recognize and respect the scarcity and special importance of land in the Northern Mariana Islands.”

Gonzales added that the

Members of Our Common Wealth, along with other concerned citizens, pose with the members of the House of Representatives after the hearing of public comments regarding House Joint Resolution 21-8, which requests the Governor to oppose further militarization of the CNMI.

Navy “cunningly used” segmentation, intentionally breaking a large project into a series of smaller ones to hide the impacts of the project in the Marianas.

“What is a Commonwealth... if we are not allowed to manage our resources; to make decisions about our future? We need to utilize, preserve, and protect every square inch of our valuable, limited land,” NMDC board member James Arriola added.

Instead of reconsidering the CNMI Joint Military Training, which the Navy initially agreed to do according to Arriola, the Navy, while now preparing a new environmental impact statement that they failed to provide earlier, made no changes to the plan.

“The bombing ranges scope and level of planned destruction, the taking of Pagan, the use of Tinian lease area for a bombing range instead of a military base—NO change. We said NO. We keep saying NO. But the U.S. Navy ignores NO. The U.S. Navy continues to threaten us,” Arriola lamented.

There are several live-fire training projects in the CNMI, including the Mariana Islands Range Complex in 2010, the Mariana Islands Testing and Training that

begun in 2015, the CNMI Joint Military Training, also in 2015, the Divert Activities and Exercises in Tinian in 2016, and the Litekyan Live Fire Training Range Complex in 2018.

#### Mortgaging our children’s future

Raised in Pagan, former representative Cynta M. Kaipat also expressed her strong support to H.J.R. 21-8, calling on the legislators to think about the children who would be inheriting the islands, as she urged them to act swiftly in passing the joint resolution.

“The type of presence that they want, is a lasting presence that will last way beyond our lifetimes,” Kaipat said. “Think about mortgaging our children’s future.”

“We’re talking about the military that wants to come here for training purposes, which we support and we understand, but not at the expense of our land. If they’re coming here to poison our land, poison our waters, to take over our limited resources, natural resources, what will we have left?”

“I’ve heard some of you say, go ahead, let them have Pagan, because we need the revenue. Really? Are you even serious about that? Think about that... They’re saying it’s okay... for more poison. Do you think you live that far from Pagan to allow that type of fury and destruction that they want to unleash on that island?” Kaipat added.

The former legislator also negated claims that they are not grateful to the military for helping the CNMI during super typhoons Soudelor and Yutu, and asserted that opposing the further militarization of the Northern Marianas is a different concern.

#### DUE TO CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

### IPI to temporarily close casino starting tomorrow

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE  
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REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC announced yesterday the temporary closure of its casino in Garapan starting today, Tuesday, at 12am, until further notice, to support the public effort in the control of the coronavirus outbreak.

Meanwhile, the CNMI Judiciary will be closed starting today, Tuesday, until Thursday, March 19, due to the threat and preparedness assessments for coronavirus.

This Friday, March 20, the Judiciary will also be closed due to austerity measures.

CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro and Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto C. Naraja said exemptions to the closure will include emergency hearings and other matters addressing critical services.

Regarding the casino’s closure, IPI said the health and safety of casino customers and employees have always been the company’s top priority.

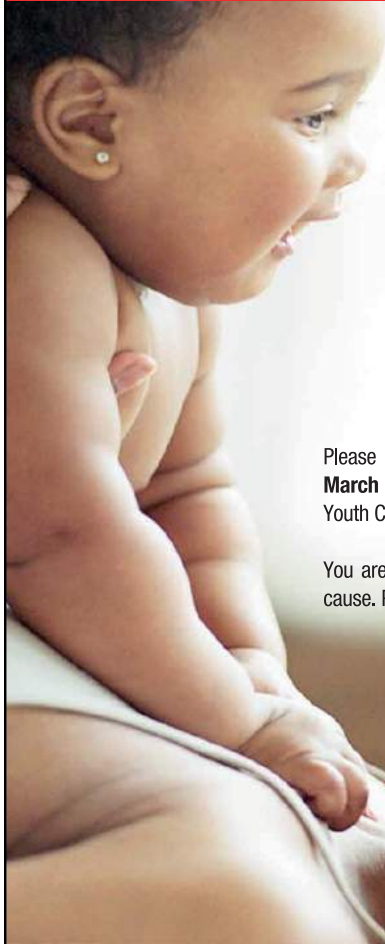
“This measure will help with the reduction of social engagements and associated health risks,” said IPI in a statement.

IPI said public interest above business interest has always been one of their guiding principles.

IPI said they will update the public and their partners on when the casino will re-open, taking into account guidance from public health authorities.

“We look forward to welcoming back our customers and employees at that time. We appreciate your understanding and thank you for your continued support and business,” IPI said.

**UPDATE**



## WIC


## POP UP

## CLINIC

Please be advised that the WIC Pop Up Clinic appointments, scheduled for **March 25, 26, & 27, 2020**, previously arranged to be held at the Koblerville Youth Center, will be conducted at the WIC Clinic located at Upper Navy Hill.

You are important to us and we apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. Please call us at (670) 664-4084 should you have any questions.

WIC provides healthy food, nutrition education, and breastfeeding guidance to more than 3,000 moms and children in the CNMI. If you are pregnant, a caregiver, or a mom with children under 5, you can get the right personalized support for you and your family.



\*This institution is an equal opportunity provider. This project was supported by Grant 7NM700NM5 CFDA 10.557 from USDA and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC). The contents above are solely the responsibility of CHCC and do not necessarily represent the official views of USDA.\*



# Manglona postpones trial of Mayor Atalig, girlfriend anew

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
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REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona yesterday ordered the postponement again of the jury trial of Rota Mayor Efraim M. Atalig, and his girlfriend, Evelyn Atalig, but this time due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Manglona vacated the jury

trial set to begin tomorrow, Wednesday, and the motion hearing set for today, Tuesday.

A status conference is set for April 29 at 1:30pm.

"The court finds that the interests of justice served by taking this action outweigh the interests of the parties and the public in a speedy trial," the judge said.

Manglona issued the deci-

sion to postpone the trial after holding a conference call with the parties in the case to discuss continuing all proceedings in this case due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Manglona said she and the parties agreed a continuance was warranted due to the confirmed COVID-19 cases in Guam and the March 15 decision of the governors of

Guam and the CNMI to close all government offices effective immediately and directing all non-essential employees to remain at home.

At the conference, Mayor Atalig and Ms. Atalig were represented by counsel David G. Banes and Steven P. Pixley, respectively.

Assistant U.S. attorneys Eric O'Malley and Garth

Backe appeared for the U.S. government.

The jury trial of the Ataligs supposed to commence last Tuesday, March 10, but Manglona postponed it until tomorrow, Wednesday, due to the arrest last March 9 of Mr. Atalig's counsel, Banes.

Banes was reportedly arrested for driving while under the influence of alcohol and leav-

ing the scene after his car hit another vehicle car in Susupe.

The court had postponed the trial several times due to various reasons.

In the federal case, the Ataligs are being charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud and theft from program receiving federal funds, wire fraud, theft from program receiving federal funds, and false statement.

In the Superior Court case, the Office of the Attorney General charged Mayor Atalig and the seven co-defendants with misconduct in public office. It is not clear whether the bench trial in this case against Mayor Atalig and four co-defendants will proceed on March 20.

## CPA to ask FAA to take over air control tower at Saipan airport

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
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REPORTER

Citing an anticipated budget deficit, Commonwealth Ports Authority board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds said the Federal Aviation Administration should take over the air control tower at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.

At CPA board's airport facilities committee meeting last week, King-Hinds said FAA taking over control of the

tower itself relieves CPA the burden of basically maintaining and operating the facility at a cost of \$200,000 a year.

CPA now estimates that the total revenue loss increased to \$6.4 million from the original projected loss of \$3.9 million due to the impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

The CPA board of directors unanimously approved last week to implement a 64-hour work schedule for all employees effective March 29.

King-Hinds in an interview

## CPA still waiting for shipment of thermal body scanner

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority is now waiting for shipment of the \$35,000 thermal body scanner that will be used to detect the body temperature of passengers arriving at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport to prevent the entry of the novel coronavirus.

CPA executive director Christopher S. Tenorio informed CPA board members during a board meeting last week that CPA purchased the thermal body scanner from Cantronic Systems Canada and that the wire transfer for the item was completed last March 5.

"CPA is working with the vendor and forwarders to have

the item air freighted as soon as possible," Tenorio said.

Last Feb. 6, CPA issued an emergency notice and expenditure of funds to procure the thermal body scanner for use at the airport.

The scanner will be used to monitor passengers and assist in identifying individuals with signs and symptoms of the COVID-19.

Last Feb. 25, the CPA board of directors approved the purchase.

Tenorio also disclosed that CPA received \$1.2 million of Federal Emergency Management Agency reimbursements last Feb. 28.

Tenorio said the amount received is for full payment of projects which include expenses for personnel and for emergency protective measures.

## MVA: Drop in visitor arrivals to persist

By **JUSTINE NAUTA**  
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REPORTER

Due to the continuous spread of COVID-19, a representative of the Marianas Visitors Authority restated recently that the CNMI will continue to see a drop in arrivals until the situation gets better.

According to Thomas Kim, marketing manager of the MVA, the CNMI has a total of 126 flights operating only from Korea and Japan.

There was supposedly 261 scheduled flights for the month of March, but with the growing case of the COVID-19 cases in Korea, there has been constant changes to flight schedules with reduced

numbers of planes.

Furthermore, there has been a decrease on the number of foot traffic in the streets of Korea, which indicates that the situation in Korea is only getting worse.

On the other hand, the Japan market is not really impacted, people in Japan are still travelling to the CNMI with Sky-mark Airlines Inc. which is the only airline that is offering services to and from the CNMI.

Kim stated that they are working closely with the Commonwealth Health Care Corp. with the health declaration form, which is mandated for all passengers to fill out prior to landing on Saipan, this

See MVA on Page 4

said CPA currently owns and operates the air control tower.

"We are one of the very few in the country who still own and operate and maintain the tower," she said.

King-Hinds said the tower is one of the concerns that they're going to put in the letter that's being drafted for U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao.

She said the letter contains a long list of items of concerns.

"Some of it is a long shot, but I'm not going to not try. I'm going to try," the chairwoman said.

King-Hinds said that, over the past two weeks since they have been monitoring what's been happening in the region and looking at their revenues, they are having issues with meeting with certain obligations.

She noted that half of CPA's

operational revenues come from aviation.

"And when you zero out anticipated flights, you're basically cutting out half, of, you know, your ability to be able to provide basic essential services," she said.

The chairwoman said one of the concerns is when there is a stop of international traffic, it also has an impact on the non-aviation side such as those people who are leasing the restaurants and other offices.

She said they're coming and asking for a discount because they're not getting any customers.

"When you have no foot traffic at the airport, you're not making any money and so they're also, you know, asking for relief. It's a whole domino effect in the entire system," she said.



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## Senate supports \$100M NMI Coronavirus Emergency Assistance bill

Senate adopted last Friday a resolution seeking support from two committees of the U.S. House of Representatives to back the Northern Mariana Islands Coronavirus Emergency Assistance Act, a legislation introduced by Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) to provide funds for general government operations in the CNMI.

"The tourism industry is the sole

driver of the CNMI's economy and COVID-19's destructive impact on the industry has been immediate with no determinable end date," the resolution stated.

The resolution takes root on the Senate being cognizant of the decline of revenue collections in the CNMI as a result of the global impact of the COVID-19 following the initial estimate of a \$48 million approximate

negative impact for FY2020 due to flight cancellations that significantly reduced the islands' tourists.

Introduced by Sen. Teresita Santos (Ind-Rota), S.R. 21-11SS1 extends the Senate's support to Sablan's bill, which would appropriate \$100 million to the Commonwealth.

The emergency assistance is to address the budget cuts and austerity measures being implemented as a re-

sult of the economic downturn brought about by COVID-19 outbreak.

The resolution further stressed that the Commonwealth government is in dire need for financial assistance to continue its operations and services. "The CNMI Gov. [Ralph DLG Torres] anticipates [to be] potentially left with \$20 million to run a government for a population of 53,000."

This includes payment for police officers and vehicles, payment for the local matching share of the Medicaid and CHIP programs, support for the needs of our hospital and public school system, maintenance of the CNMI

Judiciary and Legislature, payment of utilities of government facilities, and the protection of the well-being of the community and environment.

The CNMI has been under a State of Significant Emergency since late January, with Torres ordering the creation of response, quarantine, and preventive containment measures all over the islands. In February, the administration has announced the implementation of a government-wide austerity measure to generate savings to counter economic downturn brought about by the COVID-19 outbreak. *(Iva Maurin)*

## 3rd specimen to get tested today

By JUSTINE NAUTA  
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REPORTER

The third specimen that was sent out for testing last March 6 by the Commonwealth Health Care Corp to the Guam Public Health Laboratory for COVID-19 testing has not been

tested yet.

According to Esther Muña, chief executive officer of CHCC, it was a blessing in disguise that the specimen did not make it on time to Guam.

"When we found out there was a case in Guam, we knew for certain that it was not our specimen,"

said Muña.

According to Muña, the specimen was sent today and CHCC will know the results by tomorrow or the following day. As of March 16, there aren't any potential cases at this point.

A longer version of this story is available at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)

## STATE

From Page 1

safety of the CNMI's children, senior citizens, businesses, residents, and visitors.

"As COVID-19 moves around the world and gets closer to our beautiful shores, your government is doing everything it can to contain this virus by working with the White House, federal partners, and global health officials," Torres said in a statement Sunday night.

"As a strong island community, we have remained resilient in the face of the worst storms and economic downturns, and we emerged stronger because we chose to work together... Now is the time for vigilance, not fear or panic. Let's work together to stay informed and help each other out."

### Govt shutdown and travel bans

"I [am] suspending the government for two weeks," Torres said, adding that the shutdown would fall under an administrative leave, with every department on stand-by should its services be needed.

Under the executive order, all government offices and all non-essential government functions are shut down for two weeks. All non-essential personnel are also asked to stay home until further notice.

Essential personnel are those who work for COVID-19 public health emergency related work. Mayors of the municipalities have the discretion in designating employees that engage in such.

A travel ban for all government employees is now also in place, and any government employee who would want to leave would need to get an approval from the Governor's Office, by the governor or the lieutenant governor, and then only in cases of emergency or in directly dealing with the COVID-19 threat.

"Unless it's a health care issue, nobody will be leaving the island," the governor stressed.

### Restricted entry into the CNMI

Individuals wanting to get into the CNMI will be subjected to quarantine protocols.

Non-CNMI residents traveling into the Northern Marianas, where

ever they are coming from, including the U.S. and Guam will be restricted from entering the CNMI, unless they possess a document, recognized and certified by the Commonwealth Health Care Corp., attesting that they are not infected with COVID-19.

The date of the test must not be more than (1) week from the date of attempted entry into the CNMI.

Without proper documentation, the individual shall be quarantined for no less than 14 days, per the protocols developed by CHCC in consultation with key Commonwealth and federal agencies.

Returning residents without the same CHCC-recognized and certified document, would have to self-quarantine, following the protocol set by CHCC, for 14 days or as long as considered necessary by CHCC.

CHCC will continue coordinating with CPA, CNMI Customs Service, the Marianas Visitors Authority, and key local and federal government agencies to develop and implement protocols, quarantine measures, and increased monitoring and controls at the Commonwealth airports and seaports, as to all arriving travelers, passengers, and cargo for screening for COVID-19.

### Social distancing

"I am also effectively prohibiting activities with greater than 50 people... Community, civic, public leisure, faith-based, sports event, concerts, festival, fiestas and so forth," Torres said.

Under the directive, gatherings of 50 people or more in a single room or single space at the same time, are prohibited throughout the islands of the CNMI.

These include social, spiritual and recreational activities, including, but not limited to, community, civic, public leisure, faith-based, or sporting events, parades, concerts, festivals, fiestas, conventions, fundraiser, and similar activities.

The governor also stressed the importance of social distancing, that is, maintaining a distance of at least six feet between individuals.

"I cannot emphasize how important social distancing is," Torres said, adding that with families and friends, "if you love them, stay away from them at this point, or ... at least for the next two weeks, or maybe

a month."

To further strengthen ongoing mitigation measures, the CNMI government strongly recommends social distancing of at least 6 feet whenever possible and reasonable.

"Social distancing is important because COVID-19 is most likely to spread from person-to-person through direct close contact with a person while they are infectious, or in the 24 hours before symptoms may appear," the executive order stated.

COVID-19 can also be spread through close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes, or through touching objects or surfaces contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching one's mouth or face.

### Marianas Strong

With the threat of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) getting closer to the CNMI shores, Torres is calling on everyone to work together to stay informed, help each other out, and to remember that "we will continue to be Marianas Strong."

"Are we here to tell you that we are hundred percent safe? No, we're not," Torres said.

"But we are here to tell you that we are 100% certain that we are trying everything we can to prevent any outbreak here in our arena... and if we [will] have one, there is a playbook, there's actions in place for us to move forward."

The governor reiterated his appeal to everyone to take extra precautionary measures in terms of sanitation and again, social distancing.

"Our *man'amko* and our loved ones with preexisting illnesses are the most vulnerable to COVID-19, and we will prioritize their safety. We ask that our family and friends, who are in this group to stay home. If you feel sick, please stay home and contact your doctor or our hospital."

The Man'amko Centers on all three islands will remain closed until further notice. The Garapan Thursday Market has also been postponed.

The governor also announced that the Marianas Visitors Authority's Tagaman triathlon on Saturday will be postponed, along with the Marianas March Against Cancer, and the Flame Tree Arts Festival.

## MVA

From Page 3

will be used for screening purposes.

Forms have been distributed to all airline partners and have been and will continue to be used until this crucial situation gets better. Forms have been translated for all passengers, such as Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, arriving on Saipan as well as proper home care guide and proper

## PSS

From Page 1

dents and staff who recently returned from Guam and other COVID-19 infected areas to self-quarantine and determine whether they were infected or not.

"Between now and March 31, that is enough quarantine time, 14 days, for all the travelers who traveled off island last week for competition," he said.

This decision came following the recent COVID-19 outbreak in Guam that was announced last Sunday.

"I had to make a brisk decision to be on the safe side. My mindset is to be more conservative and be more careful and cautious. I'd rather critics criticize however they want but I want to make sure we are safe. Right now, the people who didn't travel, we want to feel safe. That's why it's a lot

## NMC

From Page 1

participants, features.

"We recognize that not all instructional content can be transitioned quickly or easily to an online environment, and we are identifying alternative plans for those courses or elements of courses," Eliptico stated.

Eliptico also acknowledged that some instructors and students may need additional assistance in accessing online content, which is why virtual drills will be conducted within the campus community with the use of combined features with Moodle and Zoom.

The drills are intended to enhance and expand student technological skills in the use of online and virtual learning platforms and to establish a smooth transition to an online virtual format.

Instructions on how this will take place and virtual drills schedule were sent yesterday, March 16, 2020.

Virtual drills are scheduled to occur between Wednesday, March 18, 2020 and March 25, 2020, with vary-

ing hygiene practices.

The CNMI saw a 30% drop of arrivals in February with only 26,700 visitors. Last year, there were 38,049 visitors in the month of February. For the month of March, it was assumed that the CNMI will get 18,000 visitors, but the numbers seem to keep decreasing.

These visitors don't include the Chinese market since flights from the key tourism market have been suspended since the month of January.

of preparing to combat [this] and to feel safe that's why we decided that we're going to extend the suspension," Ada said.

Currently, discussion is ongoing on how PSS can implement distance education for the remainder of the school year as part of their contingency plan in response to COVID-19. Distance education is basically online classes.

Ada said he will meet with the Board of Education today to discuss the contingency plan he and his staff came up with yesterday in response to COVID-19 that he and his team have prepared.

PSS is urging students and staff who are under self-quarantine to practice good hygiene like washing hands often and sanitizing hands.

PSS is also urging social distancing and staying home for the time being since it is still unsure whether COVID-19 has already penetrated the island.

ing schedules depending on students' current course scheduled meeting time.

More information about this transition to online will be shared by the leaders of NMC's Learning and Student Success Division.

According to a statement, all other NMC employees who are not team members, department heads and department chairpersons, did not report to work yesterday.

The University of Guam has also suspended all face-to-face classes yesterday after the confirmed cases were announced last March 15.

"I ask that the UOG community practice strict social distance (6 ft. of distance from other people) and hygiene practices— not just for themselves and our fellow Tritons, but for the sake of the elderly and those with compromised immune sentences," said Thomas Krise, president of UOG, in a statement.

Kirse mentioned that the UOG community and Tritons are helping with this critical situation and to act in "solidarity and compassion" in order to help everyone overcome this health emergency.





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CABBAGE

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**89¢**  
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**\$1<sup>89</sup>**  
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PROCTOR SILEX 10 CUP  
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**\$25<sup>95</sup>**



**\$34<sup>95</sup>**

BLACK+DECKER GLASS  
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TOTAL CHEF 2 SLICE  
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**\$44<sup>95</sup>**



**\$69<sup>95</sup>**

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**\$16<sup>95</sup>**

PROCTOR  
SILEX 1L  
TEA KETTLE



MAGIC CHEF 3.3 CU.FT.  
MINI STAINLESS  
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**\$299<sup>95</sup>**



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MELAMINE  
SALAD BOWL 10"  
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CLOROX WINDOW  
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**\$10<sup>95</sup>**

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# MCS suspends classes March 16-18

Mount Carmel School will suspend classes from Monday, March 16, through Wednesday, March 18, but teachers, staff, and administrators will still report to work. Classes will resume on Thursday, March 19. However, to accommodate concerns from parents for the safety of their children and family members, the school will loosen its absentee policy to allow parents to keep their children home

should they deem it necessary.

For a number of weeks now, Mount Carmel School has taken several precautionary measures to ensure the safety of our students, teachers, and their families, including suspending our short-term auditing program for foreign students, reinforcing campus cleaning with disinfectants, sharing information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on proper personal hy-

giene, and requiring a 14-day quarantine for any member of the school family returning from off-island travel.

As an additional precaution, until further notice, when classes resume on Thursday, March 19, the school will exercise social distancing by suspending all major assemblies (flag raising, Knights Calisthenics, Friday Mass/Rosary, etc.) and student activities (sports games, fundraisers,

dances, etc.) that involve more than 100 people.

This week, school officials will also meet with representatives from the Commonwealth Health Care Corp. (CHCC) and the CNMI COVID-19 Task Force to review and refine the school's current policies and procedures.

School officials are also working closely with the CNMI Office of the Governor, the CNMI Public School

System (PSS), the Commonwealth Coalition of Private Schools, the CHCC, and the CNMI COVID-19 Task Force to develop shared protocols for any mitigation and containment efforts that will be taken against the spread of COVID-19, which may include long-term school closures.

The school does have a contingency plan to transition learning online. With a majority of our teachers having been certified by the EdTech Cohort program, our communication and media infrastruc-

ture in place, and our entire student information management system online, we are positioned to make that transition. If and when that transition occurs, we will provide guidance for students and their families to help them make the transition.

"Please be assured that, as with every major initiative or emergency precaution that we take at Mount Carmel School, no matter what we do, we will provide ample notification and information to all students, parents, teachers, and families via email, our website, all our social media outlets, and local media. In other words, you will definitely hear from us and know what to do," the school said in a statement.

"These are challenging times, but we have survived devastating typhoons, economic recessions, and many other tragedies. With faith in our Lord, and faith in each other, we will get through this together. We are Knight Strong," it added. (PR)

## MARPAC donates \$3K in cash, beverages, and in-kind donations to NMC

Continuing its efforts to support higher education in the Marianas, Marianas Pacific Distributors recently donated \$3,000 in cash and beverages to Northern Marianas College for its upcoming golf tournament.

The 16th Annual NMC Foundation Open Golf Tournament, scheduled for Saturday, March 21, 2020, will be the first major golf tournament of the year. Proceeds from this year's tournament will go to helping the College recover from Super Typhoon Yutu, which destroyed 85% of NMC's facilities and classrooms.

"We are proud to be able to support Northern Marianas College and its efforts to support higher education," said Guy Pudney, resident manager of MARPAC. "I encourage



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marianas Pacific Distributors donated \$3,000 in cash, beverages, and in-kind donations to the Northern Marianas College Foundation. The donation will be used for the NMC Foundation's upcoming golf tournament on Saturday, March 21, 2020.

other companies to support the College as well."

"Having MARPAC as a sponsor has always boosted the excitement of the event," said Frankie Eliptico, NMC

interim president. "We are grateful for the company's continued support."

The 16th Annual NMC Foundation Open Golf Tournament will be held on

Saturday, March 21, 2020, at the Saipan LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort (east course). Showtime is at 6am, and the shotgun start will be at 7am. The tournament will follow a

## Naval Base Guam implements touchless ID policy at entry control points

**SANTA RITA, Guam**—To ensure the safety and health of all those who access U.S. Naval Base Guam (NBG) and Naval Security

Forces, a new policy has been implemented effective immediately for all those entering all NBG installations to hold up their ID

cards for the gate guards to be scanned.

### WHAT TO EXPECT:

■ The sentry will direct

the driver of the vehicle to collect all identification card/access credentials of all in the vehicle.

■ The sentry will direct

the driver of the vehicle to extend his/her identification card/access.

■ The sentry will observe the picture matches the driver of the vehicle, observe the identification access credential has not expired and observe the identification card/access credential for any evidence of tampering.

■ The sentry will also direct the driver to flip his/her identification.

■ The same steps will be executed for all other occupants in the vehicle.

The touchless ID policy is an effort to minimize the exposure and spread of germs to both security members and drivers. (PR)

Exemptions to the closure will include emergency hearings and other matters addressing critical services. An order will be issued at a later time.

For more information or questions, please contact the following individuals:

■ Gretchen A. Smith, Esq.  
Clerk of Court  
CNMI SUPREME COURT  
Telephone: (670) 236-9715  
Cellular: (670) 788-4363  
Email: gretchen.smith@nmjudiciary.com

■ Patrick V. Diaz  
Clerk of Court  
CNMI SUPERIOR COURT  
Telephone: (670) 235-5248  
Cellular: (670) 783-8417  
Email: patrick.diaz@nmjudiciary.com. (PR)



**A Northern Mariana Islands Social Service  
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

**ONE (1) SHELTER WORKER**

For more information, job description and application can be obtained from Karidat Main Office at Sister Remedios Community Center Chalan Kanoa.

**DOCUMENTS REQUIRED:** Complete application form, copy of diploma, resume, current police clearance and a copy of valid CNMI driver's license.

NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE.  
**CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2020 AT 4:00PM**

**JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

Looking to hire Operators and Skilled Labor (Carpenters, Masons, Steelmen) Rate to range from \$14 to 18 per hour, dependent on experience Assistance with Transportation and Accommodation Available

Send resumes to melanie.santos@lmsfm.com  
Office: 202 Hilton Road B01  
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Corner of Guguan St.  
Anatahan St. Capitol Hill**



**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY  
CNMI GOVERNMENT  
INVITATION TO BID  
ITB NO.: ITB20-DPS-065**

**SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 25, 2020 09:00 A.M.**

**"PURCHASE OF TWENTY CLASS "I" VEHICLES  
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

**/S/ ROBERT A. GUERRERO  
COMMISSIONER, DPS**

**/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON  
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S**



**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY  
CNMI GOVERNMENT  
INVITATION TO BID  
ITB NO.: ITB20-DPW-EN-066**

**SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 25, 2020 09:30 A.M.**

**"LEASE OF ONE CLASS "G" VEHICLE FOR  
THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, ENERGY DIVISION"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

**/S/ THELMA B. INOS  
DIRECTOR OF DPW/ENERGY**

**/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON  
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S**



**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY  
CNMI GOVERNMENT  
INVITATION TO BID  
ITB NO.: ITB20-DPW/EN-067**

**SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 25, 2020 TIME: 10:00 A.M.**

**"LEASE OF ONE CLASS "F" VEHICLE FOR  
THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, ENERGY DIVISION"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

**/S/ THELMA B. INOS  
DIRECTOR OF DPW/ENERGY**

**/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON  
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S**



# MCS inducts 24 new members of honor society

Twenty-four high school students were inducted into Mount Carmel School's Sacred Heart Chapter of the National Honor Society in a ceremony held last March 11, 2020, at Mount Carmel Cathedral.

The ceremony was led by deacon Tony Yarobwemal, school administrators, and society officers.

The inductees were selected by a faculty council that reviewed applications from sophomores and upperclassmen who had maintained a grade point average of 3.0 and had demonstrated how they had fulfilled the society's values of scholarship, service, leadership, and character.

This year's inductees are Haesu Yeo, Christian Felix C. Guerrero, Vaughn Andrei A. Mallari, Theresa Rose C. Schweiger, Jeremiah Jerome H. Diaz, Puti'on Primitiva Palacios-Camacho, Kaia Travilla, William Nathaniel E. Ano, Fiona Marielle A. Bucalig, Larry Dean T. Cruz, Vincent John P. Reyes, Aleia H. Santos, Kevin Kang, Richard Jesus M. Villagomez, Riley Anne O. Buenaventura, Brian Youn, Casey Pathil, Trinity Ann Camacho Cruz, Connie L. Zhu, Jefferey Y. Sheu, Kiana Lei M. Propst, Victoria P. Ancheta, and Sinahi Ray Fleming Cepeda.

The keynote speaker for the ceremony was Marie Tenorio, CNMI Public School System Special Education teacher. Tenorio, an MCS alumna, or Alum-Knight, and former member of the Sacred Heart Chapter, shared what service truly means and for NHS members to observe the needs in the community and to take action in service of others.

"My wish is that you all see that your involvement in NHS goes beyond having a fancy stole or sash, goes beyond your GPA and being able to list it on your college applications," said Tenorio. "It's about making connections with the everyday pillars of scholarship, leadership, service, and character. It's about your commitment to learning and growing,

your passion and humility that drives you, it's finding inspiration in the success of others, the heart in your service to your family, school, and our community. It's about embodying qualities of good character."

In his closing remarks, school president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero shared a poem highlighting the continued strength of MCS students and community despite the adverse trials everyone faces in the community and around the world.

After the ceremony, the inductees and their families were treated to light refreshments at the Joeten Daidai Social Hall.

Established in 1921, NHS is the nation's premier organization that recognizes outstanding high school students, with more than one million student members who demonstrate the society's trademark values of scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Mount Carmel School's Sacred Heart Chapter of the NHS was opened in 1997. **(PR)**

ASAN, Guam—The military will conduct exercises in Outer Apra Harbor on the following dates and times:

■ March 17-20 from 8am to 6:30pm  
■ March 21-22 from 8am to 6pm.

Aircraft and marine vessels are advised to remain clear of units training in the harbor.

The U.S. Marine Corps will conduct exercises in Radio Barrigada from 10am to 10pm March 16-18.

Residents in surrounding areas should be aware that blank ammunition will be used in association with this training, and should not be alarmed if they see or hear increased activity.

The military will conduct live fire exercises in Warning Area 13 and Farallon de Medinilla on the following dates and times:

■ March 18-19 from 7am to 5pm  
■ March 22 from 8am to 3pm

Aircraft and marine vessels are advised to remain clear of Warning Area 517 for the duration of these exercises and to monitor the U.S. Coast Guard broadcast Notice to Mariners for advisories.

The U.S. Navy will conduct live fire exercises in Warning Area 517 on the following dates and times:

■ March 18-19 from 7am to 5pm  
■ March 22 from 8am to 3pm

Aircraft and marine vessels are advised to remain clear of Warning Area 517 for the duration of these exercises and to monitor the U.S. Coast Guard broadcast Notice to Mariners for advisories.

The U.S. Marine Corps will conduct exercises in the vicinity of Agat Bay from 7 a.m. to 11:59pm March 20 and from midnight to 7am March 21.

Residents and mariners in surrounding areas should be aware that blank ammunition will be used in association with this training, and should not be alarmed if they see or hear increased activity.

These trainings support readiness and are critical to developing the skills needed to respond to operational missions throughout the region to ensure a stable, free, and open Indo-Pacific. **(PR)**



Twenty-four high school students were inducted into Mount Carmel School's Sacred Heart Chapter of the National Honor Society in a ceremony last March 11, 2020, at Mount Carmel Cathedral. **MCS**

ROBERT TENORIO TORRES F0197  
ATTORNEY AT LAW  
P.O. Box 503758 CK  
Saipan, MP 96950  
Tel. (670) 234-7859 | Fax. (670) 234-5749  
E-mail: robert.torres@rtlawgroup.com  
Attorney for Petitioner Velma A. Deleon Guerrero-Ada

## IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE ) Civil Action  
MATTER OF THE ) No. 20-0103  
ESTATE OF ) NOTICE OF HEARING  
GREGORIO ) AND NOTICE TO  
CABRERA DELEON ) CREDITORS  
GUERRERO )  
DOB: 9/9/1937 ) DATE: April 9, 2020  
Deceased ) TIME: 10:00 a.m.  
Judge: Joseph N. Camacho

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE GREGORIO CABRERA DELEON GUERRERO OR HIS ESTATE: NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Velma A. Deleon Guerrero-Ada has petitioned the Superior Court of Northern Marianas Islands to issue Letters of Administration for the Estate of Gregorio Cabrera Deleon Guerrero, the deceased. The attorney for Petitioner is Robert T. Torres, Attorney at Law, whose address is Plate Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiyah) P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition is scheduled to be heard on the date at the time set forth above at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands. All interested persons and entities should appear at the hearing.

Any and all persons, creditors, or entities having claims against the deceased or his Estate are hereby required by the law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within sixty (60) days of this publication or claim(s) will be barred. A copy of your claims should also be sent to ROBERT T. TORRES, Attorney at Law, at the address herein-above indicated.

Respectfully submitted this  
11th day of March 2020.

/s/  
CLERK OF COURT / DEPUTY CLERK



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS  
HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM DR-4235, 4396, 4404-MP  
PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAM  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
Call Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950 • Telephone: (670) 664-2374 • Facsimile: (670) 664-2408

## ADDENDUM #1

03/09/2020

ITB20-GOV-057 CUC Water System Mitigation Project, Site 5 As-Matuis

This is to notify all potential Bidders that the items contained in this addendum are added to and/or deleted and become part of the specifications and bid documents for the above referenced bid.

The following is a revision to the Instruction to Bidders:

**5. BID GUARANTEE:** All bids exceeding \$25,000.00 shall be accompanied by a bid guarantee of not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the amount of the bid, which may be a bid bond (form enclosed), certified check, or cashier's check, made payable to the CNMI Treasurer. Such bid bond or check shall serve to guarantee that (a) the bidder shall not withdraw his bid for a period of ninety (90) days after the scheduled closing time for the receipt of bids; (b) if his bid is accepted, he will enter into a formal contract with the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in accordance with the contract for construction included as part of the contract documents; and (c) the required performance and payment bonds will be submitted. In the event of the withdrawal of said bid within said period, the bidder shall be liable to the Government for the full amount of the bid guarantee as representing the damage to the Government on account of the default of the bidder in any particular case hereof. The bid guarantee shall be returned to bidders after the Government and the accepted bidder have executed the contract and the executed performance and payment bonds have been approved by the Government. A surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of the Treasury shall execute guarantee bonds and must be authorized to conduct business in the CNMI or an authorized representative thereof. Checks or money orders submitted as a bid guarantee shall be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Line 13 of Section 5, is revised to say:

"A surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of the Treasury or a surety acceptable to the CNMI Office of the Attorney General, has a valid business license and of good standing with the Department of Commerce as a surety company".

**All other terms and conditions remain unchanged. Acknowledge receipt of this addendum on the Bid Form.** Questions concerning this project addendum shall be directed to Leona Deleon Guerrero in writing by e-mail to [ldlguerrero@omb.gov.mp](mailto:ldlguerrero@omb.gov.mp) or fax to (670) 664-2408.

Virginia C. Villagomez  
Governor's Authorized Representative

Francisco C. Aguon, Acting Director  
CNMI Procurement and Supply

END OF ADDENDUM NO. 1



## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation Office of the Executive Director



### INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-19-028, REV.1

#### REPLACEMENT OF SADOG TASI WWTP CLARIFIER

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Replacement of Sadog Tasi Clarifier Replacement in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The intent of the contract is for the Contractor to provide all labor, equipment, supplies and materials necessary to complete the scope of work which consists of installation of a new circular clarifier mechanism and replacement or repair of the effluent launder box; removal of the old circular clarifier mechanism and sections of the effluent launder box; replacement of the RFP weirs and scum baffle, installation of a new outer scum baffle; installation of new area lighting, wires, and conduit, and disconnect boxes; installation of a new process water spray system for foam control. The work shall include the dewatering and cleaning of aeration basin #3 and the clarifier; routing process flow and maintaining conditions during the construction period; and returning process flow from the aeration basin to the clarifier. The work shall be completed with minimal disruption to the daily operation of the Sadog Tasi Waste Water Treatment Plant. CUC requires the Project to be completed in 365 calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **March 12, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

**One (1) Original and Five (5) Hard Copies** of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**CUC-IFB-19-028, Rev.1 Replacement of the Sadog Tasi Clarifier**" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) April 2, 2020**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract. All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on March 16, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Officer via email address [manny.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:manny.sablan@cucgov.org) with a copy to Christie Sablan, CUC P&S, Purchasing Technician, Senior via email address [christie.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:christie.sablan@cucgov.org).

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO  
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN, JR.  
Purchasing Administrator



# BOG offers financial relief programs

**HAGATNA, Guam**—As part of its ongoing commitment to work with customers to lessen the impacts of financial hardships owing to the evolving COVID19 situation,

Bank of Guam is offering Financial Relief Programs to regional loan customers for consumer, credit card, mortgage and commercial loans. Loan payment deferments,

as well as loan extensions are being considered.

Joaquin P.L.G. Cook, Bank of Guam president and chief executive officer noted, "Our longstanding history

of caring for and serving our community continues through providing support to our people. As the region grapples with the uncertainty of COVID19, we believe that in chal-



Cook

lenging times like these that the power of community is

needed most of all. This commitment underscores the philosophy of The People's Bank as we work through this together."

Valid until May 31, 2020, terms and conditions apply, and borrowers may apply online or at any branch.

For questions, contact Jessica Diaz at 671 472-5504, email [Jessica.diaz@bankofguam.com](mailto:Jessica.diaz@bankofguam.com), (Consumer Loans), Ann Hocog at (671) 472-5156, email [jacqueline.hocog@bankofguam.com](mailto:jacqueline.hocog@bankofguam.com) (Mortgage Loans) and Kal Rengiil at (671) 472-5168, email [kal.rengiil@bankofguam.com](mailto:kal.rengiil@bankofguam.com) (Commercial Loans).

For any questions, please direct them to Jackie.mara-ti@bankofguam.com, (671) 472-5258. (PR)

## Kacific1 broadband services starts across Asia Pacific

**SINGAPORE**—Kacific1, Kacific Broadband Satellites Group's first communications satellite, has entered commercial service and is ready to support customers across Asia Pacific.

Designed and manufactured by Boeing, Kacific1 is a high-throughput, ka-band satellite which successfully launched on Dec. 16, 2019, from Cape Canaveral, Florida. The payload and bus platform have been thoroughly tested and all

56 spot beams are now operating with full capability from the 150E orbital position.

"From the early design and through the construction phases, we knew that Kacific-1 would provide the Asia-Pacific region with cost-effective technology to transform lives and businesses with the best broadband available to remote areas. Now with the in-orbit tests completed, we can realize this huge potential," said Bob Perpall,

Kacific's chief technology officer. "In the two months since launch, we've rolled out over a hundred trial sites across Asia Pacific and are extremely pleased with the technology's performance. When we put up the initial carriers and saw the performance we were getting on that first terminal, we knew then that we had something wonderful to offer people."

Kacific engineers are upskilling local engineers in the installation and maintenance of the satellite ground technology. The rapid rollout will continue in coming months connecting both new end users and those being transferred from the provisional Ku-band network to Kacific1's Ka-band services.

Kacific's affordable, high-speed broadband services are available in these countries through local telecommunications and internet service providers:

■ **Pacific:** American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Micronesia, New Zealand, Niue, Northern Marianas, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

■ **Asia:** Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Timor-Leste, and Southern Thailand. (PR)

## Nelson implores speaker to call emergency session

**HAGATNA, Guam**—Vice Speaker Telena Cruz Nelson is imploring the Speaker of the 35th Guam Legislature to move forward in calling an Emergency Session on Monday to discuss Bill No. 313-35, the "Unemployment Benefits Act of 2020."

"The people of Guam are not just those working in the government, but our brothers and sisters working in the private sector, in many of our island's businesses and tourism industry, as well," said Vice Speaker Telena Cruz Nelson. "By addressing this measure now, we can account for the livelihoods of all our island's people, all of whom pay government taxes

to avail of the services we all need. If this measure is not promptly addressed with the level of concern it requires, it may delay any action we are currently able to take or make it more difficult to provide unemployment benefits for all of our island's people further down the line. We realize that our people may lose their jobs and that now is the time to take a strong stance and truly put our people before politics."

For more information, please contact Tihu Lujan at the Office of Vice Speaker Telena Cruz Nelson at (671) 989-7696 or [senatortcnelson@guamlegislature.org](mailto:senatortcnelson@guamlegislature.org). (PR)

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### Fund announces extension of deadlines

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Settlement Fund will be extending the deadline for members to submit the Annuity Recipient Update Form (SF-200) by 30 days. The new deadline to submit the SF-200 form is April 15, 2020.

Furthermore, in an effort to protect the *man'amko*, general public, and the employees of the Fund from contracting COVID-19, the Settlement Fund office will be closed to the public and will not accept walk-in requests and inquiries, until further notice. During this period of closure, the Fund will continue its operations and will be available to assist members only by telephone, fax, or email between 8am and 5pm, Monday-Friday.

Contact Information for the Settlement Fund: Tel: (670) 322-3863 Fax: (670) 664-8080 Email: [info@nmisf.com](mailto:info@nmisf.com)

### Susupe Community Garden meeting postponed

In response to COVID-19

concerns, the Susupe Community Garden Meeting, originally scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, is postponed until further notice. The garden will, however, remain open for watering and maintenance. Members of the community are urged to avoid public gatherings, stay home as much as possible, monitor media advisories, and practice good personal hygiene, including frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

For more information regarding the garden, contact Pedro Tudela, Division of Forestry, at 783-3628; Norma Carayoan, Division of Agriculture, 287-6581; Patti Coleman, NMC-CREES, 237-6840; or Jason Lizama, Board of Parole, 285-5125.

### New hours at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library

Effective March 15, 2020, the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library's new hours of operation will be open Wednesday through Friday from 10am to 6pm and Saturdays from 9am to 4pm. JKPL will be closed Sun-

days, Mondays, Tuesdays, and holidays.

Contact your friendly Joeten-Kiyu Public Library at (670) 235-7323(READ) for more information. For the latest news and events, please visit the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library's website at [www.cnmlib.org](http://www.cnmlib.org) and like and/or follow JKPL's Facebook page @joetenkiyupubliclibrary and Instagram @joetenkiyupubliclibrary. (PR)

### Guam to mail 253 tax refund check this week

**HAGATNA, Guam**—The Department of Revenue & Taxation has processed and the Department of Administration will mail 253 tax refund checks this week.

The checks total approximately \$1,658,769 including refunds garnished to repay government debts for error free returns filed on or before Sept. 20, 2019.

For inquiries, please contact the Income Tax Branch of the Department of Revenue & Taxation at 671-635-1809 or Mr. Edward Birn, Department of Administration at 671-475-1250. (PR)

## Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

March 17, 1999

### CIP bill climbs final hurdle

Under pressure to fast-track construction of the new prison, the House of Representatives yesterday approved Senate amendment to a legislation appropriating close to \$23 million in capital improvement project funds to set in motion a massive infrastructure plan in the CNMI. Members voted unanimously to pass House Bill 11-380 despite whining by some representatives frustrated over non-inclusion of pet projects in the list from their respective precincts. It now heads to Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio for signing into law after nearly a month since House Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Karl T. Reyes filed the bill in efforts to steer the local economy from the worsening impact of the Asian recession.

### Savings give CPA a lift

After five months of carrying out intensified cost-cutting measures, the aviation division of the Commonwealth Ports Authority finally registered a 213 percent jump in net income totaling \$56,068 in February, compared to the same period in fiscal year 1998. As of February 28, 1999, the ports authority was able to save \$205,872 from the budget of operating expenses and capital expenditures, according to Dave S. Demapan, comptroller. Man-

agement is expecting to save some \$550,000 at the end of this year with the reduction in working hours from 80 to 72 hours per pay period starting April 1, 1999. Furthermore, management is encouraging employees who are eligible to retire to avail of the early retirement program to reduce contribution to the Retirement Fund.

March 17, 2005

### Govt sees FY06 revenue to drop to \$205M

Acknowledging the impact of the garment industry's decline, the Babauta administration now projects a reduced revenue of \$205 million for fiscal year 2006. This projection was discussed during yesterday's Cabinet meeting held at the Governor's Office. "That's taking into consideration a drop in user fees," said press secretary Peter A. Callaghan. The government collects an average of \$30 million in user fees a year. Overall revenue from the garment sector, which is about \$65 million a year, translates to 30 percent of the government's revenue.

### CNMI a channel for 'ice'

Saipan and Guam remain as major transshipment points for methamphetamine hydrochloride in the international illegal drug trade, particularly those exported from the Philippines and Hong Kong, with commercial air couriers and express mail services serving as a primary means of shipment. A report released by the Department of State earlier this week said that courier and mail shipments of the drug to Guam and to the United States have typical sizes of one to four kilograms. It said that Guam has emerged as a new market for China-produced methamphetamine, colloquially known as "ice," due to high profit margins.

March 17, 2007

### 21 abandoned workers troop to Labor

Twenty-one abandoned construction workers trooped to the Department of Labor yesterday morning after they received information that Labor is expected to resolve their complaints. Twenty Filipinos and one Chinese, all employees of the defunct Elephant Corp. in Chalan Kanoa, patiently waited outside the Division of Administrative Hearing Office until late afternoon. When the Saipan Tribune left Labor at 4:50pm, there was no order yet as administrative hearing officer Jerry Cody was still completing the decision. The workers interviewed by the Saipan Tribune said they went to Labor after they were informed that there will be "something" coming out. They said they don't have any idea what it was all about.

### PIC picks up \$50K tab for Hopwood renovation

Pacific Islands Club recently acted as a Good Samaritan to Hopwood Junior High School, picking up the tab for a \$50,000 renovation project at the largest junior high school in the CNMI. PIC general manager Kieran Daly said the renovation entailed the construction of new basketball courts, repair of classroom ceilings and roofs, paved hallways, landscaped and constructed planters, as well as the installation of lunch benches around the school, where students and school employees can enjoy lunch everyday. Daly said the renovation project started in January and ended last Monday. Apart from the construction of facilities, the hotel also donated new books worth \$2,000 to add to the dwindling number of books in the school's library.



## AS 3 COVID-19 CASES CONFIRMED

# GovGuam to close for 14-day period

**GUAM**—Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, in consultation with the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has implemented a 14-day suspension of non-essential Government of Guam (GovGuam) operations effective today, Monday, March 16. All critical health and public safety operations will continue uninterrupted. Directors will advise employees if they are required to report for essential government operations.

The two-week suspension of non-essential government operations is intended to give DPHSS officials and our CDC advisors the best chance to investigate and mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Upon confirmation of three positive results for COVID-19 on Sunday, DPHSS and the Guam Customs and Quarantine have revised information previously reported to the public, based on further investigation. Out of the three confirmed cases, two individuals previously reported to have arrived on March 2nd are confirmed to have actually arrived

from Manila on February 29th. The initial information provided to DPHSS proved to be inaccurate after further investigation.

It is important to note that the spread of COVID-19 is a dynamic situation and any information resulting from an investigation may change as it develops.

## Confirmed school closures

The following updates have been provided to the Joint Information Center:

■ Guam Department of Education: closed until further notice

■ University of Guam: All on-campus classes canceled until further notice. All online classes resume normal operations.

■ Guam Community College: The College Assembly scheduled for March has been canceled until further notice. The campus will remain closed to the public until classes resume at 4 p.m. on Monday. Further guidance will be issued if there

are changes.

■ Saint Paul Christian School: closed until further notice

■ Guam Adventist Academy: closed until further notice

■ Mt. Carmel School: closed from March 16 through March 18

Leon Guerrero is meeting with school officials today to discuss further guidance.

## Guidance for travelers

Those in the community who returned from the Philippines on Feb. 29 and have flu-like symptoms are advised to stay home and contact your respective physician for further guidance. If you recently return from travel off-island, stay at home and avoid contact with others. Do not go to work or school for 14 days. Discuss your work situation with your employer before returning to work. Seriously consider canceling non-essential travel. Additional guidance regarding all non-resident travelers will also be provided.

## Guidance for senior citizen centers

All senior citizen centers will be closed beginning Monday, March 16. As a precautionary measure, all individuals who have frequented a senior center in the last 14 days are asked to stay home and contact a doctor should flu-like symptoms present themselves.

## Adjust your lifestyle now that COVID-19 is in Guam

Although daily life must resume, the community is advised to take personal measures to help stop the spread of COVID-19. In an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the CDC is encouraging social distancing. Take extra measures to put distance between yourself and others to further reduce your risk of being exposed to this new virus. Social distancing includes avoiding high fives, shaking hands, hugs, or close contact with others. Take precautions now:

■ It is currently flu and respiratory disease season and the CDC recommends getting a flu vaccine, taking everyday

preventive actions to help stop the spread of germs, and taking flu antivirals if prescribed.

■ Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. However, if soap and water are not readily available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

■ Do not touch your mouth, eyes, and nose with unwashed hands.

■ Do not come in contact with people who are sick.

■ Practice proper cough etiquette – cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash or cough into your sleeve if tissue is not available.

## Call your doctor if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing, do not attempt to go directly to your healthcare provider unless it is an emergency. Instead, call your healthcare provider in advance for medical advice. Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases. The following symp-

toms may appear 2-14 days after exposure:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

If sick, stay home. Do not go to work, school or public areas, and avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis. Do not entertain visitors in your household or visit others. If sick, separate yourself from other people and animals in your home. If sick, do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home.

## Stay up to date with reputable sources

It is important to note that the situation can change quickly. The community is reminded to only share official notices and visit the following links for the most up-to-date information:

■ CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

■ DPHSS website: <http://dphss.guam.gov/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-n-cov/>

■ GHS/OCD website: <https://ghs.guam.gov/coronavirus-covid-19>

For more information, contact DPHSS Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at (671) 735-7154. (PR)

## REPUBLICAN CAUCUS TO SPEAKER:

# ‘Honor governor’s 14-day self-quarantine order’

**HAGATNA, Guam**—Yesterday, the Republican Senatorial Caucus met immediately after the Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero’s briefing with the 35th Guam Legislature at noon to discuss the Emergency Session as called by the Speaker.

The following is a statement by Minority Leader Telo Taitague, Assistant Minority Leader Louise Borja Muna, Minority Whip James C. Moylan and Senator Wil Castro. The Republican caucus is united in working on a bill that will protect and assist our people as result of the COVID 19 outbreak on Guam.

However, we are requesting that the Guam Legislature not go into session until two weeks from today in order that we may:

Honor the fourteen (14) day precautionary self quarantine order issued by the governor and as reflected in a self-imposed guidance issued by the legislative officers in a memo issued this morning;

Allow for ample time to draft and/or review proposed legislation relative to COVID 19;

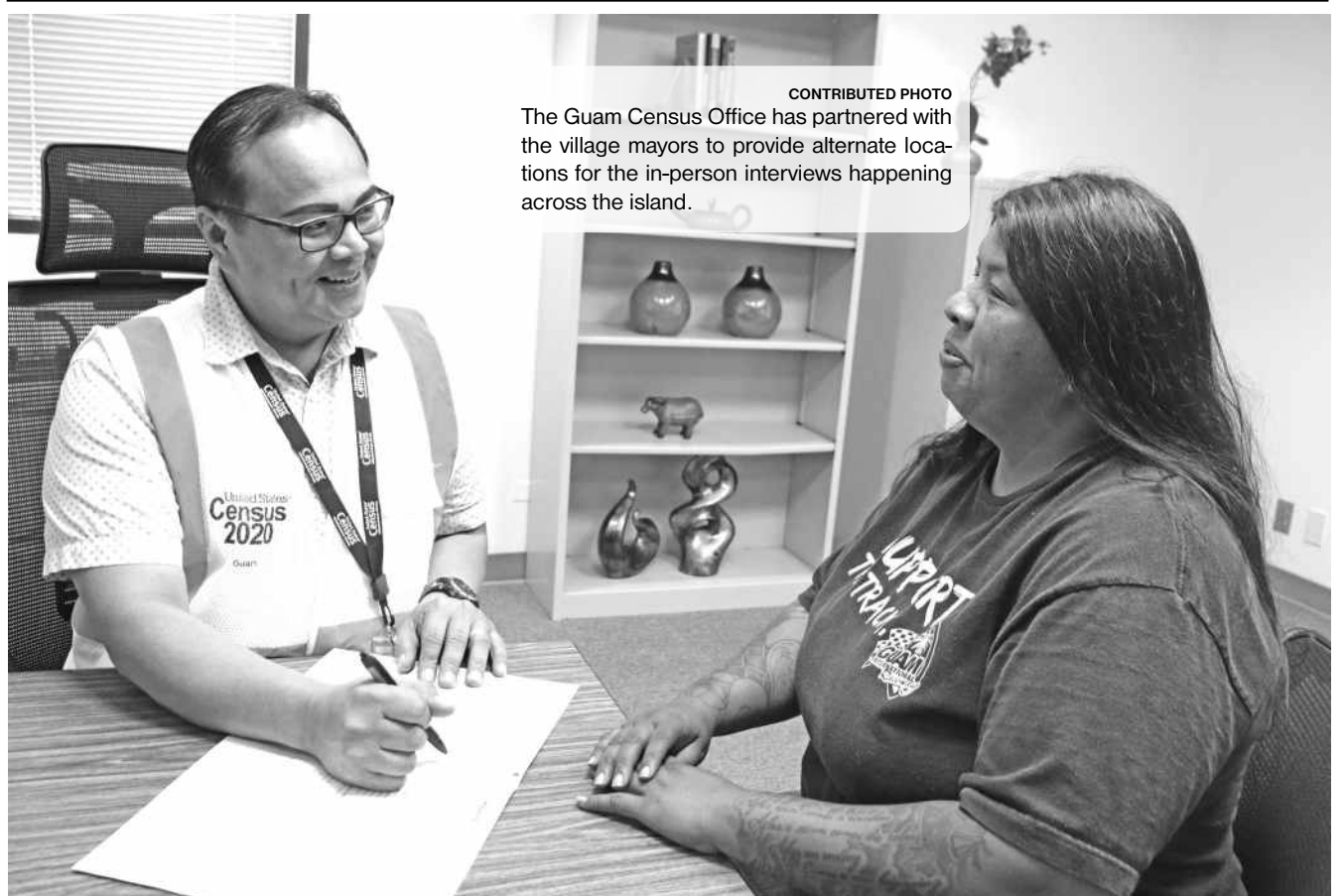
Provide all three branches, to include the private sector, sufficient time to institute protocols, attain data, report any impact and propose sol-

utions so that the Guam Legislature may act upon in a transparent and bi-partisan manner; and last

To allow the Governor’s pertinent line agencies leadership to carry out their mandates under the current emergency situation and not be stopped to address the legislature in a mandatory Committee of the Whole in order to adequately allay any concerns we have relative to the proposed appropriations measure.

The Republican caucus remains committed to a bi-partisan legislative solution that will assist the Maga’haga in carrying out her organic act authority to address the emergency situation on Guam. I Maga’haga possesses sufficient transfer authority and organic act authority under the office’s emergency powers to address any issues affecting the life, health and overall welfare of our community until such time the body may choose to provide additional supplemental aid.

For additional information concerning this media release you may contact the Office of Minority Leader Telo Taitague at 989-8356 or via e-mail at [senatortelot@gmail.com](mailto:senatortelot@gmail.com). (PR)



## 2020 Census of Guam launches Census Centers

**TAMUNING, Guam**—The 2020 Census of Guam is excited to announce the opening of Census Centers.

The Guam Census Office has partnered with the village mayors to provide alternate locations for the in-person interviews happening across the island. These locations, called “Census Centers”, will serve as trusted venues for census workers to interview residents who were unable to be

interviewed at their home during the initial visit.

The 2020 Census of Guam is the once-in-a-decade population count of our island, providing a snapshot of our growing and diverse community. It collects basic counts of the island’s population, as well as specific demographic, social, economic, and housing characteristics of Guam. During the interview, census workers will ask questions about every member of the household, in-

cluding, age, race and ethnicity, income, education, and employment status. Census workers will also ask questions about the housing structure itself, such as the year it was built, number of rooms, and monthly utility costs.

The Census Centers in each village are recommended by the respective mayors and have been vetted by the Guam Census Office. Each center provides a private location where residents

may complete their in-person interview. All Census Center interviews are by appointment only and must be arranged through the Guam Census Office.

When making the appointment, residents will need to provide the information from the Notice of Visit they received at their home. No walk-ins will be accepted.

Please contact the Guam Census Office at 671-645-2020 for more information about the Census Center in your village.



# Opinion

Hafa Adai!

## Saipan Tribune

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### EDITORIAL

## With coronavirus, Donald Trump is confronted with the crisis of his presidency

There is a term that is often used in a different context but comes to the forefront of our minds as the coronavirus rolls through the layers of our society. Coronavirus has gone viral in our politics, in our economy and, of course, our public health arenas.

Schools are closing. Professional sports events are being canceled. And people are a little scared to even go to work. Fear of a viral infection has gone viral, and one immediate consequence is an economic hit for companies and employees. Employers are watching productivity fall, and employees are wondering how they will make rent if they can't go to work.

A health crisis is also an economic crisis for individuals and, should it last long enough, it can become a crisis for society as a whole. Some economists estimate a relatively mild pandemic would cut 2020 gross domestic product dramatically, and warn that the spread of the coronavirus has sharply increased the prospects of a recession.

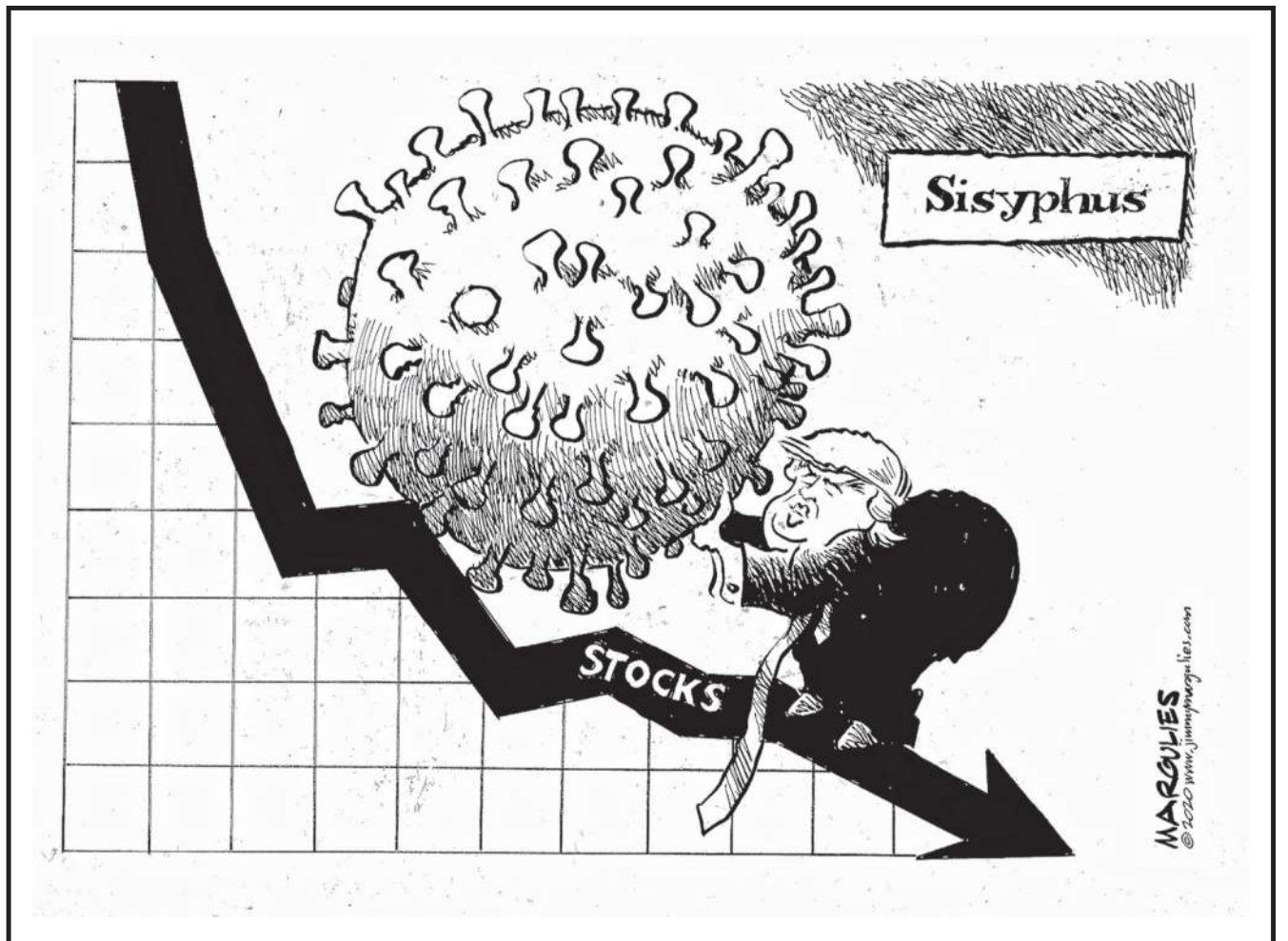
This is a watershed moment for this president's leadership. In an address from the Oval Office on Wednesday, President Donald Trump stepped up to offer several encouraging ideas. He noted a new spending bill he signed into law last week, and said he instructed the Small Business Administration to offer loans to affected businesses. He called for payroll tax relief, noted that he spoke to health care executives who would extend coverage and dispense with some fees, and mentioned providing financial support for people who need to self-quarantine.

These are important steps, to which we would add another step that's well within the president's power. He could discard his tariffs to give companies and consumers additional relief from unnecessary expenses and broadly boost the economy at a time when the stock market has dipped into bear territory. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers and a growing list of industries recognize this, and want tariff relief included in any stimulus package. In the best of times, tariffs inhibit growth and raise costs. And these aren't the best of times.

What was missing from the president's speech was a broader strategic vision for how this virus is brought to an end. It is too soon to say precisely how that will happen, of course. And the president did mention the need to wash hands and take practical steps to avoid getting sick. But the larger strategic objective has to be to slow the spread of the virus and thereby buy time for our health care industry to care for those who do get sick while also developing a vaccine. Simply slowing the spread of the virus is crucial, because doing so can enable our health care infrastructure to handle what comes from this virus.

Another key step is for Americans not to panic or over-

See **CORONAVIRUS** on Next Page



## We will continue to be Marianas Strong

Statement by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres regarding the presence of confirmed positive COVID-19 cases on Guam

We know we have received news about the three confirmed positive COVID-19 cases on Guam.

While the CNMI remains without a confirmed case, we continue our ongoing surveillance measures, which we started since January, at the airport, hospital, and around Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

In consultation with the presiding officers of the Legislature and the COVID-19 Task Force, Lt. Gov. Palacios and I are hereby shutting down all government offices and all non-essential government functions. All non-essential employees of the Commonwealth's departments and agencies are asked to stay home until further notice. We will provide additional updates on the government tomorrow. Please stay tuned to media partners and your department and agency heads for updates.

Now, we understand that there are questions and concerns about banning United flights from Guam to Saipan. As I have stated in February, I have no authority as Governor to stop the flights from Guam, nor do I have the authority to stop any flights to the CNMI for that matter. That is a decision for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) under the US Department of Transportation. Just like we did in January with the China flights, I will be directing the Commonwealth Ports Authority to consult with the FAA on the Guam United flights, and we will notify you once we receive an update.

I will be meeting with CHCC CEO Esther Muna, her leadership team, and our COVID-19 Task Force tomorrow to push forward the next steps of our COVID-19 pandemic plan. This is exactly why we created the task force.

As COVID-19 moves around the world and gets closer to our beautiful shores, your government is doing everything it can to contain this virus by working with the White House, federal partners, and global health officials.

We will be asking individuals, regardless of travel history, who were off-island for work or travel to self-quarantine themselves for at least 14 days. We will be working with department heads and private sector partners in implementing this immediately.

We will begin implementing social distancing protocols within our community. Our manamko and our loved ones with pre-existing illnesses are the most vulnerable to COVID-19, and we will prioritize their safety. We ask that our family and friends, who are in this group to stay home. If you feel sick, please stay home and contact your doctor or our hospital. We will formalize these protocols tomorrow.

This afternoon, the Marianas Visitors Authority Board of Di-

By **RALPH DLG TORRES**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Ralph DLG Torres is the 9th governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the youngest governor in the United States.



rectors has officially postponed the Tagaman triathlon this Saturday. We are thankful that our Saipan Marathon was successful and that there were no cases. The Marianas March Against Cancer (MMAC) Steering Committee has just announced that the annual event is postponed. The Flame Tree Arts Festival will be postponed. Our Man'amko Centers on all three islands will be closed until further notice. Our Garapan Street Market will be closed until further notice.

The Public School System has informed me that they will be suspending classes from Monday to Wednesday, which is their next Board of Education meeting. From there, they will then make a board decision on class schedules moving forward.

The Northern Marianas College is suspending all face-to-face classes through March 17, 2020. Transition of a majority of face-to-face courses to online platforms will occur on Wednesday March 18, 2020 while the remaining classes will transition by March 23, 2020. A complete schedule will be provided tomorrow. NMC classes which are conducted entirely online will continue as scheduled.

Let me be clear. We know this is getting serious now more than ever. As Governor, I will continue to do everything I can, beside the good leaders in our islands, to protect you and your families. We were the first state or territory in the country to implement surveillance measures and health screening of all inbound passengers.

Information will continue to change, and we ask that you get your information from CHCC, the World Health Organization (WHO), or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

As a strong island community, we have remained resilient in the face of the worst storms and economic downturns, and we emerged stronger because we chose to work together. When it comes to this, we have no time for politics or grandstanding. My administration and I will work with our health experts. Now is the time for vigilance, not fear or panic. Let's work together to stay informed and help each other out.

Remember, we will continue to be Marianas Strong.



**EDITORIAL POLICY**

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

# We are in the midst of a global challenge

By **LOU LEON GUERRERO**  
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

*This is Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero's COVID-19 special address to the people of the U.S. territory.*

Last night, I announced that we received our first confirmed cases of COVID-19. Each of these three patients presented to GMH on Saturday and were isolated pending the outcome of their respective test results. Each patient remains in isolation, and Public Health has since initiated its close contact and tracing investigation.

Because I want to give Public Health officials and our CDC advisors the best chance at investigating and mitigating against the spread of COVID-19, I am ordering a 14-day suspension of all nonessential government services effective immediately. All critical health and public safety operations will continue uninterrupted.

This 14-day shutdown includes schools and all other government agencies. Directors will advise government employees if they are required to report for essential government operations.

While our Public Health officials are doing their job to detect and track any potential spread of COVID-19, I am asking that we, as a community, take actions to make that task easier. We can do this by taking steps to prevent further transmission.

By now, you have likely heard the term social distancing quite a bit. This practice includes maintaining a distance of between six and ten feet from the next person when you are out in public. Please practice social distancing. It is imperative to our community's health.

Additionally, on the recommendation of CDC and local public health officials, I am prohibiting large gatherings of one hundred people or more. This prohibition includes social, school, sports, and religious gatherings.

Detailed guidance on this prohibition will be provided in the next few hours.

I know that many of you have questions. Shortly, the Joint Information Center will be announcing the establishment of a hotline intended to address your concerns as best we can. Additionally, other guidance, as it becomes available, will be provided by the Joint Information Center.

I do not take this action lightly. I do it knowing that it will temporarily but significantly affect our way of life—but protecting you and your families is my first responsibility.

I know that many of you feel a sense of fear. But you are our most effective weapon against this virus. Equip yourself with information. Stay home if you are sick, avoid close contact with those who are ill.

If you need to go to the grocery store, the pharmacy or a medical facility—do that. But know that limiting your contact with those who might be ill is how you can help the doctors, nurses,

By **LOU LEON GUERRERO**  
Special to the Saipan Tribune



and first responders who are keeping us safe.

As I have said in the past, this situation is developing in real-time, we share the information we have as quickly and accurately as we can. But sometimes that information may change as details are investigated and verified.

For example, after further vetting and investigation, we have determined that two of the individuals who have received positive COVID-19 results actually arrived on Guam on February 29 and not March 2, as previously reported.

We are in the midst of a global challenge. Many countries around the world, 49 States, and the District of Columbia all have confirmed COVID cases.

We are not alone. And I am taking these actions now to protect our community as a whole.

# Suddenly, a very serious nation

I had planned to write about Woody Allen.

Hachette Book Group had agreed to publish the renowned filmmaker's memoir but changed its mind after dozens of employees walked out in a protest based on the allegation that Allen molested his 7-year-old stepdaughter in 1992.

This seemed interesting and important because it involves fundamental issues such as freedom of expression and the basic assumption of innocence that lies at the heart of our justice system.

It seemed important until last Wednesday, that is, when our nation experienced a rapid psychological shift in its attitude toward the coronavirus. President Donald Trump made a nine-minute speech to the nation admitting at last the seriousness of the pandemic and announcing stunningly drastic measures in response: All travel and trade with Europe would end by Friday at midnight. As it turned out, the president's statements were inaccurate, and the next day his aides had to correct them.

But the point was clear: Suddenly, the pandemic became very serious; everything else, including Woody Allen, pales in comparison. If we needed more convincing, it came as commentators were just beginning their analysis of the president's speech: The National Basketball Association postponed its season, and Tom Hanks and this wife both tested positive for the coronavirus.

And the nation suddenly began to respond seriously, as well. School districts and universities were closed. Events large and small were postponed or cancelled. People stopped shaking hands and began to buy up hand sanitizer.

Of course, all this could be an overreaction. The virus may fizzle, and by fall we could be back to playing football as usual. By October the most popular Halloween costume could be the coronavirus.

On the other hand, in our good fortune, we may have lost touch with just how wrong the world can go. It's easy to forget that most of human history has been characterized more by hunger, disease, privation, suffering and war than by our comparative comfort.

My mother was born in 1912 and thus was old enough to have vague childhood memories of the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918, which killed up to 50 million people. Her immediate family escaped infection, but she remembers her parents going to the assistance of other relatives and members of their small east Texas community.

But I don't think my mother's generation was particularly impressed by the Spanish flu. They were already used to members of their community dying prematurely from typhoid, diphtheria, polio, yellow fever and other infections that are easily treatable today. They had just finished a world war. In a few years they would experience the Great Depression and another world war.

This familiarity with catastrophe and near-catastrophe may have engendered a healthy stoicism in that generation, as well as a realistic understanding of what it has meant to be a human being for most of our history. We could learn from them.

On the evening of Trump's declaration of a national emergency, I relaxed in a lawn chair on my driveway with the help of an

By **JOHN M. CRISP**  
Tribune News Service



*John M. Crisp, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, lives in Georgetown, Texas, and can be reached at jcrispcolumns@gmail.com.*

adult beverage. A neighbor wandered over in the gathering dusk. I warned her to keep her distance, and she took it with good humor.

She expressed concern for her army physician husband, who cannot work from home. In a few minutes another neighbor strolled over, and then another. A couple stopped their dog-walk long enough to join in. Some had been to the local grocery store and reported that the aisles were jammed and the shelves were empty. But it appears that among us we have plenty of toilet paper, and I sensed a willingness to share.

I suspect that similar scenes are occurring across the nation, six or seven neighbors, standing five or six feet apart, no shaking hands, no touching.

But also no panic. And I sensed a calm resignation and resolve to face whatever comes. Since Trump's election, our country has been trying to figure out exactly who we are. How we react to the coronavirus will provide significant insight into that question.

# CORONAVIRUS

From Page 10

react. Doing so can create shortages and tax resources that are best directed toward specific targets. If test kits, financial supports and resources best given to state and local authorities are used efficiently, we will all be better served. And that point is worth expanding to say that even while economic help is needed in some areas, there is no substitute for aggressive testing, containment and mitigation of coronavirus cases.

It should also be obvious, even to Congress, that the federal government has to act quickly. Financial relief has to quickly reach people in need and medical officials need quick decisions and resources to combat this problem.

Nonetheless, economic growth is already taking a hit from the coronavirus, and that impact must not be minimized. Businesses are planning for substantial profit and revenue setbacks, so any stimulus package must be of sufficient size to address specific problems and offer a sense of calm across the broader economy. This will work out, but it's much more likely to work out without lasting damage if the federal government has a handle on the issue as a whole, if Americans across the country believe that

those in charge have the right vision, and if that vision is being executed effectively.

To that end, the announced European travel ban undercut the chance to lead here. Restricting travel and quarantining the sick are age-old methods for slowing and stopping the spread of a contagious disease, and they remain among our defenses because they are effective. But the United States needs the support of its allies in Europe, so blindsiding them with a sudden ban will have unforeseen consequences (and the White House has already had to walk back some of what the president said).

More importantly, it's not obvious why the president imposed the ban on some countries and not others. Something as disruptive as a travel ban needs to be attached to a thoughtful and thorough strategy. It has to make intuitive sense, otherwise it is just divisive and distracting from work that would make a difference.

We needed the president's speech to mark a turning point away from false narratives, so that medical experts and other parts of government could be freed up to do what they need to do. A day after the speech, it was clear that's not what we got. The White House will never have a better opportunity to lead on this issue than it has right now, so it needs to revise its approach.

This is the first big national crisis of the Trump administration. It's the kind of crisis that presidents have to deal with, so how he handles it and what the outcome is will be a test of his presidency and our nation's resilience.

This pandemic already has changed, at least in the short run, the way we work and play. One question now is whether this White House is modeling how an administration should handle a pandemic. Is it creating a template to address the next virus that starts running across international borders?

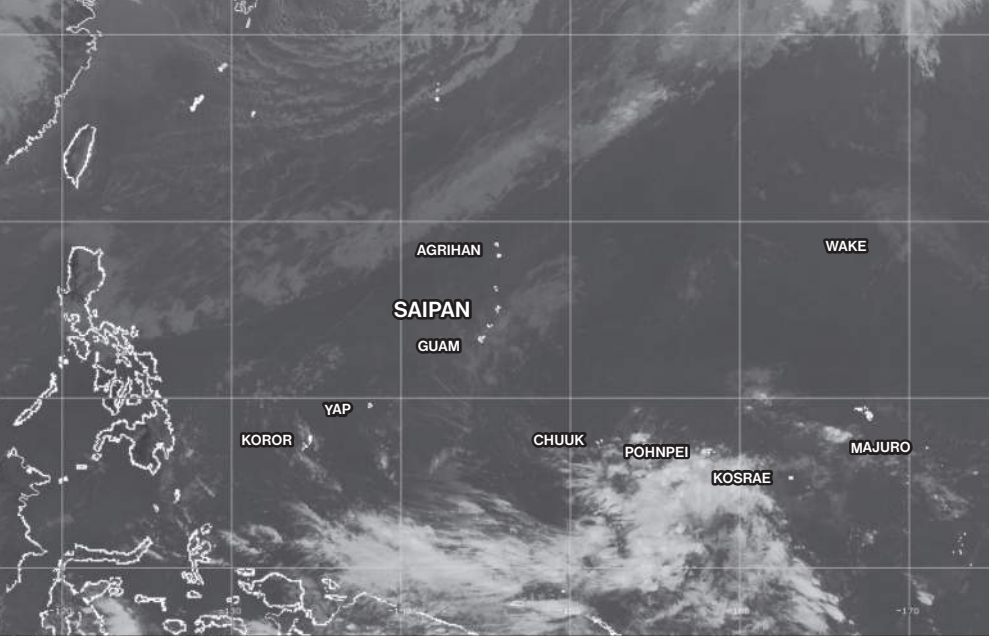
The economic fallout will abate when the administration demonstrates that it has a broader, coordinated and comprehensive strategy to slow and eventually control the spread with a vaccine.

This is a moment when public trust in those who are in charge is critically important. Our leaders need to demonstrate they have compassion for the sick and for the rest of the country that is anxious about this virus; they need to demonstrate that they have a handle on the work that needs to be done; and they must demonstrate that they have the courage, strength and wisdom required to make the tough decisions ahead. This is when presidential leadership matters most.



# The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy. Isolated showers.		Partly cloudy. Isolated showers.		Partly cloudy. Isolated showers.		Partly cloudy. Isolated showers.	
86°	76°	87°	76°	87°	76°	87°	76°	87°	76°



**PICTURE TIME: 6:33 AM, MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2020**  
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Models bring the trade-wind disturbance through the Marianas today through Tuesday, and GFS indicates shower coverage will be scattered by afternoon. Showers should decrease to isolated by Tue afternoon, with mostly cloudy skies lingering into Wednesday. The rest of the forecast is unchanged, featuring a return to dry season weather the rest of the week

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: [www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/)

MICRONESIA			▲▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Showers	86° / 76°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	87° / 80°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Windy	85° / 79°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°	

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼ °F
Auckland	Sunny	66° / 55°	
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	73° / 41°	
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	75° / 70°	
Honolulu	Showers	79° / 71°	
London	Partly Cloudy	57° / 46°	
Los Angeles	Showers	60° / 48°	
Manila	Mostly Sunny	91° / 77°	
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	82° / 66°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	79° / 72°	
New York	Mostly Sunny	43° / 38°	
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	61° / 46°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	64° / 45°	
Busan	Sunny	57° / 52°	
Rome	Mostly Sunny	66° / 45°	
Salem	Cloudy	78° / 60°	
San Francisco	Showers	54° / 44°	
Seoul	Sunny	59° / 45°	
Tokyo	Sunny	64° / 45°	
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	64° / 43°	

### NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- \*11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at [www.nmicrimestoppers.net](http://www.nmicrimestoppers.net)

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
3:29 AM	LOW TIDE	1.55	
8:32 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.18	
1:11 PM	LOW TIDE	1.57	
9:03 PM	HIGH TIDE	-0.03	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:23 AM	6:27 PM
Wednesday	6:22 AM	6:27 PM
Thursday	6:21 AM	6:27 PM
Friday	6:21 AM	6:27 PM
Saturday	6:20 AM	6:28 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	1:02 AM	12:32 PM	-
Wednesday	1:57 AM	1:26 PM	-
Thursday	2:48 AM	2:20 PM	-
Friday	3:36 AM	3:12 PM	-
Saturday	4:20 AM	4:02 PM	-

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 1, 2020							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	Daily	UA174	7:30am	8:11am	Daily
UA156	6:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6	UA112	4:45pm	5:26pm	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
SKY816	4:35pm	7:30pm	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7	SKY811	10:15am	3:00pm	Daily
SKY816	5:05pm	8:00pm	6				
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3451	3:20am	6:30am	Daily	7C3452	9:35pm	2:30am+1	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
				7C3452	10:05pm	2:30am+1	3
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:05am	6:05am	1, 5	OZ6233	7:30am	12:50pm	4, 6
7C3403	4:35am	8:35am	Daily	OZ625	8:10am	1:40pm	1, 5, 7
OZ6243	3:10pm	7:00pm	4, 6	7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ624	3:30pm	9:10pm	1, 5, 7	TW307	7:45pm	1:05am+1	4, 7
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily	7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:15am	9:50pm	Daily via GUM	UA189/174	12:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA117/193	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR	OZ703/6233	7:20pm	12:50pm+1	3, 5 via ICN
OZ6243/704	3:10pm	5:00am+1	4, 6 via ICN	UA192/174	10:40pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA156/183	6:20pm	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via GUM	UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA156/193	6:20pm	11:50pm	2 via GUM-ROR				

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, BC SkyMark ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.				
SAIPAN TO ROTA				
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily	1203 9:00AM 9:15AM Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily	1204 10:00AM 10:15AM Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily	1205 11:00AM 11:15AM Daily
				1206 12:00PM 12:15PM Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1207 1:00PM 1:15PM Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1208 2:00PM 2:15PM Daily
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily	1209 3:00PM 3:15PM Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily	1210 4:00PM 4:15PM Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily	1211 5:00PM 5:15PM Daily
				1212 6:00PM 6:15PM Daily
ROTA TO GUAM				
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily	
GUAM TO ROTA				
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily	
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily	
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily	



# Business

## Rendezvous opens atop Saipan Vegas

By MARK RABAGO  
mark\_rabago@saipantribune.com  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

When the going gets tough, the tough gets going.

That appears to be the marching orders of friends Marvin Deocares, Boy Ching, and Leo Canedo when they opened Rendezvous International Cuisine last week.

Located on the newly built second floor of Saipan Vegas along Beach Road in Chalan Kiya, Ren-



The new restaurant's lechon kawali.

dezvous held its promotional opening last Friday amidst the economic downturn the CNMI is experiencing brought about by the coronavirus outbreak.

To help with the uncertain times, Rendezvous is offering 30% off on its breakfast, lunch, and dinner buffets throughout the rest of March.

That means all-you-can-eat breakfast is only \$8.75, buffet lunch is \$12.59, and dinner smorgasbord is \$17.50.

"It's an introductory price that will certainly give the most bang for your buck. We know times are tough, but that doesn't mean you can't enjoy and live life happily anymore. That's why we really heavily discounted our buffet offerings for breakfast, lunch, and dinner," said co-owner Deocares.

Despite the low introduc-

tory price, Rendezvous's buffet offerings are no means ordinary, as Deocares readily volunteered that their menu is comparable to what the top hotels on Saipan serve.

"Chinese, Japanese, continental, Korean, Filipino, and local cuisine we have it all and at the price you can afford," he said.

The dinner buffet especially holds a lot of promise, as they will be serving up a lot of seafood dishes plus bottomless draft beer.

Aside from the excellent food at an affordable price, Rendezvous also boasts of a spacious dining area as it can easily accommodate 200 customers with another 100 seats available at the adjacent VIP room.

"Everything's brand new here. The whole restaurant

is newly constructed and all the tables, chairs, and kitchen equipment are new and imported from the mainland U.S.," said Canedo.

Despite being located on the second floor of Saipan Vegas, Rendezvous is a family restaurant with groups with accompanying minors able to access the restaurant via a back entrance on the ground floor.

Ching said they expect to hold their opening in a month's time with no less than Filipino celebrity chef Zhe Jacinto gracing the occasion.

"Zhe is resident chef for the daily program *Rise & Shine* in the Philippines and we are excited to have her as our guest when we celebrate our grand

opening soon," said Ching.

Currently, eight wait staff, seven cooks, and two stewards man the restaurant.

"There's nowhere to go but up. We're definitely facing an uphill climb with our economy heavily dependent on tourists. Let's just say we're preparing when the economy picks up. At least we've already laid the

groundwork," said Deocares.

Rendezvous International Cuisine is open from Monday to Sunday, with breakfast buffet 7am-10am, lunch buffet 11am-2pm, and dinner buffet 6pm-9pm. For more information and for reservations, you can reach Rendezvous through their Facebook page.

**For more information and for reservations, you can reach Rendezvous through their Facebook page.**



PHOTOS BY MARK RABAGO

Rendezvous International Cuisine is located on the second floor of Saipan Vegas along Beach Road in Chalan Kiya.



Grilled squid is also in the all-you-can-eat menu.

## Global economic coordination not happening in virus crisis

**FRANKFURT, Germany** (AP)—When the global economy melted down in 2008, world leaders swiftly created an international forum to boost economies by spending more and keeping trade open. Central banks announced rate cuts within seconds of each other.

But so far, nations' approach to the economic shock from the coronavirus outbreak is looking very different.

With the world economy teetering, plenty of action is being taken—but often without coordination or consultation that could increase its impact. U.S. President Donald Trump banned flights from Europe, surprising outraged allies and causing markets to collapse. Plans for fiscal stimulus have popped up separately and incrementally in Italy

and Germany as U.S. Congress debates aid measures.

The Federal Reserve, Bank of England, and European Central Bank poured in more stimulus —announced separately, the Fed on March 3, the Bank of England on Wednesday and the ECB on Thursday.

The disease, which has infected over 156,000 people worldwide, for most causes only mild or moderate symptoms. For some, especially the elderly and the sick, it can cause more severe illness. At least 5,800 people have died so far, and another 74,000 have recovered.

On Monday, leaders of the Group of Seven rich democracies—the U.S., France, Italy, Britain, Canada, Japan and Germany—are to talk by phone, according to a tweet from French

President Emmanuel Macron. What action or commitments result from that remains to be seen. Investors in financial markets brushed off an earlier G-7 statement by finance officials. Since then, major indexes have fallen by the most since the market crash of 1987 and remain unusually volatile.

It is a sharp contrast with the coordination shown during the global financial crisis, when the Fed, ECB, Bank of England, Bank of Canada and others announced a half-percentage point rate cut simultaneously on Oct. 8, 2008, as stock markets plunged.

The current piecemeal approach does not sit well with former policymakers who dealt with previous crises, including ex-ECB chief Jean-Claude Trichet.

## Tenn. brothers donate sanitizer products bought for resale

Thousands of bottles of hand sanitizer and packs of antibacterial wipes and medical masks have been donated after a failed attempt by two Tennessee brothers to resell them for profit during the U.S. coronavirus outbreak.

Boxes were taken Sunday from a storage unit and the home of Matt Colvin of Hixson, Tennessee, news outlets reported. The items, including 17,700 bottles of hand sanitizer, were donated to a local church and some supplies will head to Kentucky where Colvin had cleared store shelves.

Colvin and his brother, Noah Colvin, had cleared store shelves of the items before online retailer Amazon stopped their sales and the state attorney general sent a

cease-and-desist letter.

The purchases were first featured in a story in The New York Times in which the brothers drove to stores scooping up supplies around Chattanooga, Tennessee, on March 1, the day after the first U.S. coronavirus death was announced.

Noah Colvin then drove 1,300 miles (about 2,100 kilometers) over three days across Tennessee and Kentucky, filling a rented truck while his brother stayed home preparing for more supplies he had ordered.

Matt Colvin said he posted 300 bottles of hand sanitizer for sale on Amazon between \$8 and \$70 each and immediately sold them all.

"It was crazy money," he told the newspaper.

The next day, Amazon pulled Matt Colvin's items along with thousands of other similar listings, citing price gouging. Some of the sellers behind the listings were suspended, while eBay soon banned U.S. sales of sanitizers and masks.

Matt Colvin had turned Amazon sales into a six-figure career starting in 2015, advertising Nike shoes and pet toys and by following popular trends.

In early February, when the coronavirus was spreading in China, the former Air Force technical sergeant bought 2,000 "pandemic packs" from a local liquidation firm that were left over from a defunct company. He bought them at \$3.50 per pack and resold them at a substantial profit.



# Nation

## US moves nearer to shutdown amid coronavirus fears

**CHICAGO (AP)**—Officials across the country curtailed many elements of American life to fight the coronavirus outbreak on Sunday, with health officials recommending that groups of 50 or more don't get together and a government expert saying a 14-day national shutdown may be needed.

Governors and mayors closed restaurants, bars, and schools as the nation sank deeper into chaos. Travelers returning home from abroad were stuck in line for hours at major airports for screenings, crammed into just the kind of crowded spaces that public health officials have urged people to avoid.

In a sign of impending economic gloom, the Federal Reserve slashed its benchmark interest rate to near zero. President Donald Trump sought to calm a jittery nation by declaring the government has "tremendous control" over the situation and urging people to stop the panic buying of grocery staples that has depleted store shelves nationwide. Gun stores started seeing a similar run on weapons and ammunition as the panic intensified.

As Americans struggled with changing their daily habits, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a dramatic recommendation: Because large events can fuel



**AP**  
A Caltrans freeway sign reads: "Wash your hands, Stay healthy, Avoid COVID-19" in the San Fernando Valley section of Los Angeles.

"But our city is facing an unprecedented threat, and we must respond with a wartime mentality."

His decision came after Dr. Anthony Fauci, the federal government's top infectious disease expert, said he would like to see a 14-day national shutdown imposed to prevent the virus's spread.

"I think Americans should be prepared that they are going to have to hunker down significantly more than we as a country are doing," said Fauci, a member of the White House task force on combating the spread of coronavirus. He heads the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health.

There is no indication Trump is considering such a move.

The worldwide outbreak has sickened nearly 170,000 people and left more than 6,500 dead, with thousands of new cases confirmed each day. The death toll in the United States climbed to 64, while infections passed 3,700.

the spread of the disease, it said gatherings of 50 people or more should be canceled or postponed throughout the country for the next eight weeks. It added that, at any event, people should take proper precautions, including handwashing and keeping one's distance.

But in a sign of the difficulty of striking the right balance,

the CDC statement also said the recommendation does not apply to "the day to day operation of organizations such as schools, institutes of higher learning, or businesses."

Even before the warning, parts of the country already look like ghost towns, and others are about to follow as theme parks closed, beaches

shooed away spring breakers and states and large cities ordered bars and restaurants shuttered.

"The time for persuasion and public appeals is over," Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker said. "This is not a joke. No one is immune to this."

New York City said eateries could only accept takeout and

delivery orders. Mayor Bill de Blasio also ordered nightclubs, movie theaters and other entertainment venues closed.

"These places are part of the heart and soul of our city. They are part of what it means to be a New Yorker," he said in a statement Sunday night.

## Govt official: Coronavirus vaccine trial starts Monday

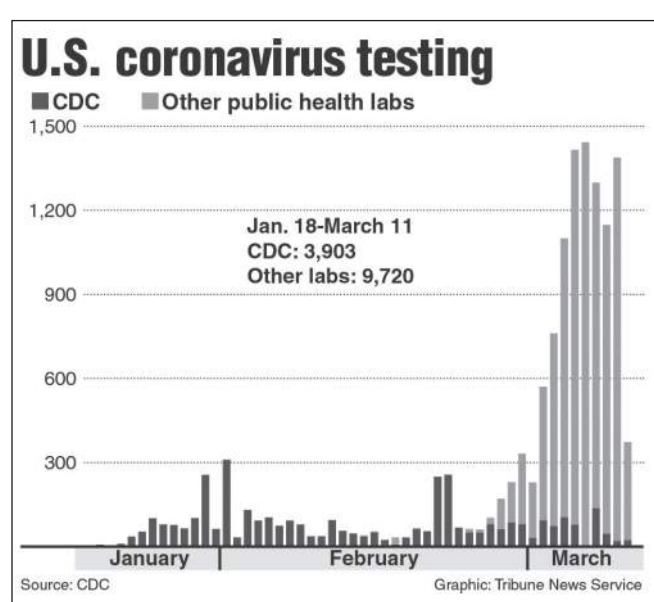
**WASHINGTON (AP)**—The first participant in a clinical trial for a vaccine to protect against the new coronavirus will receive an experimental dose on Monday, according to a government official.

The National Institutes of Health is funding the trial, which is taking place at the Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute in Seattle. The official who disclosed plans for the first participant spoke on condition of anonymity because the move has not been publicly announced.

Public health officials say it will take a year to 18 months to fully validate any potential vaccine.

Testing will begin with 45 young, healthy volunteers with different doses of shots co-developed by NIH and Moderna Inc. There's no chance participants could get infected from the shots, because they don't contain the virus itself. The goal is purely to check that the vaccines show no worrisome side effects, setting the stage for larger tests.

Dozens of research groups



around the world are racing to create a vaccine as COVID-19 cases continue to grow. Importantly, they're pursuing different types of vaccines—shots developed from new technologies that not only are faster to produce than traditional inoculations but might prove more potent. Some researchers even aim for temporary vaccines, such as shots that might guard people's health a month or two at a time while longer-lasting

protection is developed.

Also in the works: Inovio Pharmaceuticals aims to begin safety tests of its vaccine candidate next month in a few dozen volunteers at the University of Pennsylvania and a testing center in Kansas City, Missouri, followed by a similar study in China and South Korea.

Even if initial safety tests go well, "you're talking about a year to a year and a half" before any vaccine could be

ready for widespread use, according to Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

That still would be a record-setting pace. But manufacturers know the wait—required because it takes additional studies of thousands of people to tell if a vaccine truly protects and does no harm—is hard for a frightened public.

President Donald Trump has been pushing for swift action on a vaccine, saying in recent days that the work is "moving along very quickly" and he hopes to see a vaccine "relatively soon."

Today, there are no proven treatments. In China, scientists have been testing a combination of HIV drugs against the new coronavirus, as well as an experimental drug named remdesivir that was in development to fight Ebola. In the U.S., the University of Nebraska Medical Center also began testing remdesivir in some Americans who were found to have COVID-19 after being evacuated from a cruise ship in Japan.

## Bigger than any one of us: Biden, Sanders take on pandemic

**WASHINGTON (AP)**—Former Vice President Joe Biden and Sen. Bernie Sanders sought in Sunday's Democratic debate to cast themselves as best-positioned to lead the nation through a global pandemic, uniting in their criticism of President Donald Trump's response to the fast-moving coronavirus but diverging in how they would confront the spiraling public health and economic crisis.

Biden pledged to deploy the United States military to help with recovery efforts and warned that a federal financial bailout may be necessary to stabilize the economy. Sanders leaned into the same domestic policy proposals that have dominated his campaign, arguing that the government-run health insurance system he has long championed would allow the U.S. to respond faster to a health crisis.

The coronavirus outbreak has rapidly reshaped nearly all aspects of American life, shuttering schools across

the country and significantly curtailing travel. Virus fears have also halted campaign rallies and prompted some states to delay upcoming primaries because of warnings from public health officials against large gatherings.

"This is bigger than any one of us—this calls for a national rallying for one another," Biden said.

Indeed, the stakes in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination have shifted dramatically since Biden and Sanders last debated less than three weeks ago—as have the contours of the contest. After a sluggish start to the primary season, Biden has surged to the front of the field, drawing overwhelming support from black voters and consolidating the backing of several more moderate rivals who have dropped out of the race. He's also actively courting the endorsement of Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a liberal ally of Sanders who dropped out without throwing her support behind him.



# Asia

## Asia urges vigilance to maintain hard-won infection drops

**TOKYO (AP)**—Millions of people began holing up at home, stocking up on supplies and keeping a wary eye on how close they got to friends and neighbors as fear of the coronavirus spread to more places around the world Monday.

Resorts closed on the Las Vegas strip. Restaurants offered only take-out, if they were open at all. Schools, concerts, sporting events — even small-scale St. Patrick's Day parties — were canceled.

It's a reality Northeast Asia has been living with for months, but while the focus of the pandemic appears to be shifting away from its original epicenter, many in Asia continue to urge vigilance against anything that might hurt hard-won gains.

"If we loosen our grip on the quarantine, it could be a matter of time for the embers of small-scale cluster infections to be revived," the South Korean mass-circulation Dong-a Ilbo newspaper said in an editorial Monday.

China, where the virus was first detected in December, now accounts for less than half of the world's 169,000 cases, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

A shutdown of public gatherings and a quarantine of the hardest-hit central region has steadied China's caseload as the virus spreads rapidly elsewhere. Most of the world's 77,000 recovered patients are in China.

Formerly ubiquitous traffic began returning to Beijing. Office buildings, however, enforced strict screenings for fever, and most restaurants only offered take-out. Children usually snowed under with classes and homework found themselves glued to screens, shopping, chatting and watching video clips.

As the world inched toward a shutdown of much of pub-



**AP**  
A woman wearing a face mask walks near workers wearing protective gears preparing to spray disinfectant as a precaution against the new coronavirus in Seoul, South Korea, Monday, March 16, 2020.

lic life — bars, restaurants, school, work — Asian cities have become increasingly worried about importing cases of the virus from abroad after making inroads containing its spread at home.

Starting Monday, travelers arriving in Beijing from overseas will be quarantined for 14 days in designated facilities at their own expense. Previously, people without symptoms could self-quarantine at home.

In the latest tally, China's National Health Commission reported 16 new cases of the coronavirus in the previous 24 hours. Twelve of them were imported from overseas, including four in Beijing.

China now has 80,860 confirmed cases. The health commission said that 67,749 patients have recovered and been discharged from hospitals. Fourteen more deaths were reported in the last 24 hours, raising the toll to 3,213.

Though China still has

the most infections, a dozen other countries have more than 1,000 cases, mostly in Europe.

Religious leaders gave sermons to empty pews or to the faithful watching online Sunday after public worship was curtailed in many places. The Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem's Old City was being closed indefinitely, and the Vatican closed off next month's Holy Week services to the public. Still, 83-year-old Pope Francis ventured out of the Vatican to visit two churches in Rome to pray for the sick.

In the United States, health officials recommended a limit to groups of 50 or more people and a government expert said a 14-day national shutdown may be needed. Americans returning from abroad encountered chaotic airport health screenings and closed-down communities.

There are signs that the

coronavirus outbreak in South Korea is slowing down, but officials are still scrambling to prevent infections from exploding again.

South Korea on Monday reported 74 more cases over the past 24 hours, a day after it announced 76 new cases. The figures are the lowest daily increase in new infections in about 25 days. That's a stark contrast with the more than 900 new cases reported on one day in late February.

There are still worries that new infections might surge again from those returning from Europe or from locals who are reportedly resuming attending mass gatherings like church services. There have been calls for authorities to further postpone the new school year, which was to begin on March 23 after two rounds of delays.

South Korean Prime Minister Chung Se-kyun said the country's decline in virus

cases was a "hopeful sign" but urged caution over widening outbreaks across Europe and the United States.

Chung said South Korea should "never loosen its guard."

On the first day of Spain's quarantine, long lines formed for food as police patrolled. Soldiers and police sealed off the Philippines' densely popu-

lated capital, Manila, from most domestic travelers. Austria planned to limit people's movement, and Lebanon was put on lockdown, closing down Beirut's famed seaside corniche.

As the public curtailed their daily lives, governments also adjusted.

The prime ministers of Australia and Singapore announced on Monday that they will meet by video conference after Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong canceled an Australian visit this week.

"Business and governments can carry on even through the midst of all this," Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison told Seven Network television.

Several Australian states Monday declared public health emergencies that create punishments for failing to comply with self-isolation orders. Australia's most populous state, New South Wales, has suspended new jury trials because of the virus.

### Bank of Japan holds emergency policy meeting after Fed cut

**TOKYO (AP)**—The Bank of Japan has convened an emergency policy meeting after the U.S. Federal Reserve cut its key interest rate to 0.25%.

Bank of Japan Gov. Haruhiko Kuroda called the meeting for Monday instead of Wednesday and Thursday as originally planned.

A BOJ statement said the meeting was "to discuss monetary control matters based on recent economic and financial developments."

The BOJ cut its key policy rate to minus 0.1% several years ago as part of a massive, prolonged effort to use cheap credit to keep the economy growing.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index was the sole Asian benchmark that did not lose ground early Monday. By midday, it was up 0.3%, while many other regional markets sank more than 2%. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 plunged 7%.

Japan's economy, the world's third largest, contracted at a 7.1% annual

pace in the last quarter and is expected to shrink further in this quarter given the shock from the coronavirus outbreak.

Early Monday, the BOJ, Bank of Canada, Bank of England, European Central Bank, Federal Reserve, and Swiss National Bank announced a coordinated plan to increase cash in the markets using U.S. dollar "liquidity swap line arrangements," offering U.S. dollars weekly in each jurisdiction with an 84-day maturity on top of the usual measures.

Apart from slashing the U.S. benchmark interest rate to near zero, the Federal Reserve said it was buying \$700 billion in bonds to help smooth disruptions in the Treasury market.

The surprise intervention reflected that the Fed views the economy as being on the brink of recession and has signaled it will do all it can to minimize the blow to households, companies and the markets.

## South Asian leaders call for cooperation on coronavirus

**NEW DELHI (AP)**—Leaders and officials from the eight South Asian nations held a video conference Sunday calling for closer cooperation to combat the spread of the coronavirus in the region, which is home to a fifth of the world's population.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who initiated the conference, proposed creating a COVID-19 emergency fund to be used by South Asian nations to combat the spread of the disease.

Presidents and prime ministers from Afghanistan, Bangla-

desh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, and a representative from Pakistan, shared steps taken by their governments in their efforts to control the spread of the virus.

Pakistan was represented by Zafar Mirza, a special assistant to Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The eight nations are members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, or SAARC, which was formed in the 1980s to boost economic and regional cooperation between the countries. However, the rivalry and disputes between

India and Pakistan have stalled the group's progress.

"We must all prepare together, we must all act together, we must all succeed together," Modi said.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said his main concern was his country's open border with Iran, which has been hit especially hard by the new virus. Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa both said they were worried about their island nations' drop in tourists.

Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina proposed holding a conference among health officials from South Asian countries.

The virus has infected more than 156,000 people worldwide and killed over 5,800.

While the coronavirus can be deadly, particularly for the elderly and people with other health problems, for most people it causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. Some feel no symptoms at all and the vast majority of people recover.



# World

**R**OME (AP)—Meeting with friends, dining out, worshipping and other daily routines have nearly halted as nations take drastic steps to try to stop the coronavirus pandemic.

Religious leaders gave sermons to empty pews or to the faithful watching online Sunday after public worship was curtailed in many places. The Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem's Old City was being closed indefinitely, and the Vatican closed off next month's Holy Week services to the public. Still, the 83-year-old Pope Francis ventured out of the Vatican to visit two churches in Rome to pray for the sick.

In the United States, health officials recommended a limit to groups of 50 or more people and a government expert said a 14-day national shutdown may be needed. Americans returning from abroad encountered chaotic airport health screenings and closed-down communities.

In a sign of how much the pandemic has grown, China now accounts for less than half of the world's 168,000 cases, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

The country where the virus was first detected in December had long been the epicenter of the COVID-19 illness, but a shutdown of public gatherings and a quarantine of the hardest-hit central region has steadied its caseload as the virus spreads rapidly elsewhere. Most of the world's



People walk past a convenient store where the latest cover of a magazine is stuck on a pillar outside of it on Sunday, March 15, 2020, in New York.

## DAILY LIFE NEAR A STANDSTILL as nations try to halt pandemic

77,000 recovered patients are in China.

Though China still has the most infections, a dozen other countries have more than 1,000 cases, mostly in Europe.

On the first day of Spain's quarantine, long lines formed for food as police patrolled. Soldiers and police sealed off the Philippines' densely popu-

lated capital, Manila, from most domestic travelers. Austria planned to limit movement, and Lebanon was put on lockdown, closing down Beirut's famed seaside corniche.

Ireland ordered all pubs and bars to close for two weeks—including on Tuesday, St. Patrick's Day—and urged people not even to hold house parties.

Two pub industry groups had warned of the "real difficulty" in keeping people apart in the country's famous watering holes.

Italy welcomed a Chinese medical team to help it cope with its patient workload as health officials warn of what will come as the virus hits elsewhere.

"It's not a wave. It's a tsunami," said Dr. Roberto Rona, who's in charge of intensive care at the Monza hospital.

Italy on Sunday reported its biggest day-to-day increase in infections—3,590 more cases in a 24-hour period—for a

total of almost 24,747. And 368 more deaths brought its toll to 1,809, more than a quarter of the global death toll.

For most people, the coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, and those with mild illness recover in about two weeks. But severe illness including pneumonia can occur, especially in the elderly and people with existing health problems, and recovery could take six weeks in such cases.

The needs to stop the virus from spreading to the most vulnerable people and to not

overwhelm health care systems with sick patients are pushing the urgent calls for people to avoid public crowds or just stay home.

People should go out "only alone or with the people who live in their apartment," said Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, whose country has 800 infections.

That was echoed by one of America's top infectious disease experts.

"I think Americans should be prepared that they are going to have to hunker down significantly more than we as a country are doing," Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of Health told NBC's "Meet the Press."

Governors in California, Illinois and Ohio told all bars and restaurants to close or reduce their number of customers. New York City will shutter the nation's largest public school system as early as Tuesday, sending over 1.1 million children home.

With fears increasing that the pandemic will depress U.S. economic growth, the Federal Reserve took emergency action by slashing its benchmark interest rate to near zero and deciding to buy \$700 billion in Treasury and mortgage bonds.

Travelers returning to the U.S. after the Trump administration imposed a wide-ranging ban on people entering from Europe faced hours-long waits for medical screenings. Images on social media showed packed arrival halls and winding lines.

"This is unacceptable, counterproductive and exactly the opposite of what we need to do to prevent #COVID19," Illinois Sen. Tammy Duckworth tweeted.

Italy banned passengers from taking ferries to Sardinia and halted overnight train trips, which many in the north had used to reach homes and families in the south.

### Pope goes on Roman walkabout, prays for end to pandemic

**VATICAN CITY** (AP)—Pope Francis left the Vatican to make a surprise visit Sunday to two churches in Rome to pray for the end of the coronavirus pandemic—a move that came even as Italian health authorities insisted people stay home as much as possible to limit contagion in the heart of Europe's outbreak.

Francis who recently had a cold, headed first to a Rome basilica, St. Mary Major, where he often stops to give thanks after returning from trips abroad. There he prayed before an icon of the Virgin Mary dedicated to the "salvation of the Roman people."

"With his prayer, the Holy Father has invoked the end of the pandemic that is striking Italy and the world, implored for healing for the many sick, recalled the so many victims of these days and asked that

their family members and friends find consolation and comfort," Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said in a statement.

After that, the 83-year-old pope left the basilica, near Rome's central train station, and headed toward central Piazza Venezia, strolling along a brief stretch of Via del Corso, a noted shopping street for Romans. He then ducked into a church that most tourists pass by, St. Marcel on the Corso.

The church keeps a "miraculous crucifix that in 1522 was carried in procession through the neighborhoods of the city so that the Great Plague of Rome ended," Bruni said.

Some 90 minutes after he left Vatican City, Francis was back.

In ordinary times, the Via

del Corso would be thronged with Sunday strollers and window-shoppers, but very few Romans are on the streets these days. A national lockdown allows people to go out to work, to purchase essentials like food or medicine or to take care of those in need.

A sole cyclist was pedaling down the street when Francis, in his white robes and with a security detail walking behind, approached the St. Marcel church.

The pope's prayerful foray across town came just hours after the Holy See announced that the Vatican's Holy Week ceremonies will go ahead without the public Italy tries to contain its coronavirus outbreak.

Bruni said "as far as Holy Week liturgical celebrations are concerned, I can specify that all are confirmed."

### Explosion in Lagos kills at least 15, Nigerians probe cause

**LAGOS, Nigeria** (AP)—An explosion hit Nigeria's commercial capital of Lagos early Sunday, killing at least 15 people and sparking search-and-rescue efforts to save people still trapped in collapsed buildings, emergency officials said.

The explosion in the Amuwo Odofin area of Lagos was heard several kilometers (miles) away. It destroyed more than 50 buildings, which either collapsed or caught fire, in three different neighborhoods, according to Ibrahim Farinloye, the spokesman for the National Emergency Man-

agement Agency.

Fires were spreading to nearby oil pipelines, so there were fears of more damage or explosions. The death toll was expected to rise because residents said some people remained trapped in collapsed buildings.

"Fifteen bodies have been recovered, including a whole family of four who were heading to church before they were cut short in the explosion," Farinloye said.

At least two people have also been rescued alive, he said. One building is a school where injured children have

been pulled from the rubble, some covered in blood.

Nigerian officials were not yet able to identify the cause of the massive explosion. A naval base is located nearby.

Linda Uche, a resident, told The Associated Press the sound of the explosion and the extent of the damage was far more serious than a usual oil pipeline explosion, which happens not infrequently.

It was the most serious explosion in Lagos since January 2002, when bombs from a military armory exploded, killing more than 1,000 people.



# Overdrive



The 2020 Toyota 4Runner.

**F**ord is about to enter the truck-based SUV market—the Ford Bronco, and I get it. People are passionate about these things.

Yet, there are only two truck-based SUVs in the mid-size market—the Jeep Wrangler and the Toyota 4Runner. The Toyota what?

You can be forgiven for forgetting the Tacoma pickup-based ute exists because Toyota hasn't remade it since the Mesozoic Era (actually, 2009). It hasn't had a wall-to-wall marketing campaign for some time, unlike the Jeep. You'd have to have been living on Mars not to have seen one of the Jeep ads (and I'm told there's a Mars trim coming). But 4Runner fans know the Toyota is there.

"What do you drive?" I recently asked a male acquaintance in Los Angeles.

"A 4Runner. Best car I've ever owned."

"What do you have in the garage?" I asked a female shuttle driver in Texas.

"4Runner, I love it."

We automotive journalists are guilty of pooh-pooing anything that hasn't been remade in the last five years. We're like children attracted to the latest shiny thing. But evidence is that you don't have to be shiny to be relevant these days.

Take the Dodge Challenger and Charger muscle cars, two of the most-recognized nameplates in America thanks to savvy marketing, state-of-the-art infotainment and big horsepower. Make that ginormous horsepower.

Customers shrug at the fact that the Dodge brothers are based on an ancient 2006 chassis.

Ditto the 4Runner.

I climbed into my 4Runner tester with Mrs. Payne on a cold winter night at Detroit Metro airport after a

long week away. The snow was blowing and the roads were covered with it. Detroit potholes were lurking. Boy, was I glad to see the 4Runner's big bones and knobby, high-profile tires.

We threw our luggage in the cavernous boot, then cranked up the interior temps—heated seats, front rear-defroster, climate temps—with big, knobby dials to match the tires. After clearing the Toyota of crusted

snowplows often take days to catch up to rutted roads. But this night, we decided to stick to paved roads.

The SUV bombed happily along, the 4.0-liter 270-horse V-6 mill roaring its approval. V-6s, of course, are frowned upon in this woke green age of turbocharged fuel-sipping 4-bangers. But with its guttural growl and instant torque, the six-holer matches 4Runner's can-do charac-

ter. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Customers sure don't think the 4Runner is old-fashioned. Sales numbers in the last five years have seen a steady climb from 76,906 in 2014 to 131,888 last year. That's a 70% jump, mirroring the 60% rise in Toyota Tacoma pickup sales to nearly 250,000 units over the same period.

As the U.S. has moved to SUVs, the idea of a Tacoma SUV with a

ing fish-mouth grille. After a while on M-59, ice and snow began to coat the brick like gnats in a Florida summer. Soon, the 4Runner's brick was coated and the car's brain told me adaptive cruise-control was no longer available. No problem, but a reminder of the many challenges self-driving systems have to overcome.

The 4Runner encountered no navigation challenges on the route thanks to another piece of updated software, Apple CarPlay. My wife simply plugged in her phone, and Google Maps routed us around stormy obstacles—traffic backups, road closures, accidents—for the quickest way home.

Speaking of plugs, 4Runner also has a three-prong outlet in the boot—perfect for charging laptop or other devices, because who carries those round cigarette lighter chargers with them anymore?

In a week of frosty, snowy weather, the Toyota was a welcome addition to the driveway. The big lug's not much to look at, but my \$48,000 Venture Edition tester served its purpose as a proper utility vehicle with heated front thrones, fold-flat second-row seats for extended cargo room, slide-out rear floor and updated 8-inch screen that keeps pace with the Wrangler's modern U-Connect system.

Toyota prices comparably favorably to the Wrangler, too, while offering more cargo space and better interior quiet—if less overall character than the Jeep.

Both the Wrangler and the 4Runner are ol' St. Bernards that will run the extra mile to save you from the elements. That's how owners like them and sales numbers prove the point. Which sets up an interesting opportunity for the coming Bronco, which will surely bring lots of cutting-edge Ford tech to the ladder-frame segment.

The 4Runner is a loyal old friend. And customers are loyal back.

## Trusty Toyota 4Runner is 4EVER

By HENRY PAYNE  
THE DETROIT NEWS

### NUTS & BOLTS

#### 2020 TOYOTA 4RUNNER

- **Vehicle type:** Front-engine, rear- and all-wheel drive, 5-passenger SUV
- **Price:** \$37,240, including \$1,120 destination charge (\$48,877 AWD Venture Special Edition as tested)
- **Powerplant:** 4.0-liter 6-cylinder
- **Power:** 270 horsepower, 278 pound-feet torque
- **Transmission:** 5-speed automatic with second transfer-case shifter for AWD
- **Performance:** 0-60 mph, 7.7 seconds (Car and Driver); towing, 5,000 pounds
- **Weight:** 4,750 pounds
- Fuel economy: EPA 17 city/20 highway/18 combined
- Report card
- **Highs:** Rugged beast; nice modern touches like Apple CarPlay and 3-prong electric plug
- **Lows:** Dated interior; gotta muscle that transfer-case shifter
- **Overall:** 3 stars

ice and snow, I tossed the snow brush into the back seat—rugged, mid-size trucks mean never having to worry about mussing the interior.

After a long day, we were in no mood to spend the next 45 minutes crawling along Detroit's pocked cart paths worrying about a blowout in subfreezing temps. The opposite was true of 4Runner. The beast positively loved the conditions.

Like a salty sailor on rough seas, the 4Runner relies on old technology to chart its course. I eased the shifter into neutral, then yanked the truck's second transfer-case shifter (familiar to Wrangler fans, too) back into four-wheel drive. With all four wheels churning, we set off into the gloom.

The 4Runner sits a ridiculous 10 inches off the ground with a Jeep-like 33-degree front departure angle for off-roading. Heck, we probably could have just cut through the woods to go home. The ute even includes a crawl mode for nature's worst. This fearlessness has made Toyota's ute a favorite of folks in rural communities where

ter. Like the V-6s and V-8s under the hoods of Chargers and Challengers,

hatch instead of a pickup bed has real appeal. Ford no doubt hopes for the same gains from a Ranger pickup-based Bronco.

Like Dodge, 4Runner mixes its old-fashioned with a taste of modern tech.

Once on M-39 headed north, I set adaptive cruise-control to 60 mph to avoid Melvindale and Dearborn speed traps. The localities are famous for using the 55-mph speed-limited Southfield Freeway to raise revenue, catching travelers who've been traveling the 70 mph common to the rest of the freeway.

Asian automakers have been aggressive about outfitting all their vehicles—right down to \$20,000-something compacts—with safety systems like adaptive cruise and automatic emergency-braking. The 4Runner is no exception. In addition to saving my bacon from police radar, automatic cruise-control is a welcome trip companion.

Adaptive cruise is enabled by the big radar brick in the 4Runner's gap-



## Life & Style

# Ticket sales dive at box office; lowest turnout in 20 years

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Ticket sales plunged to their lowest levels in at least 20 years at North American movie theaters as the coronavirus pandemic led to one of Hollywood's worst weekends at the box office.

Receipts totaled about \$55.3 million in U.S. and Canada theaters, according to studio estimates Sunday. Not since 2000 has weekend box office revenue been so low, according to data firm Comscore, when \$54.5 million in tickets were sold on a quiet September weekend. More people went to the movies the weekend after Sept. 11, 2001.

Disney's latest release from Pixar, "Onward," remained the top film, earning \$10.5 million in its second weekend. The Christian romance "I Still Believe" from Lionsgate brought in \$9.5 million. Sony's comic-book adaptation "Bloodshot," with Vin Diesel, grossed an estimated \$9.3 million in its debut. The Blumhouse horror satire "The Hunt" opened with \$5.3 million.

All of those totals were notably below expectations. Most films last week had aimed to do 25% to 50% better. The weekend's sales overall were down 45% from the weekend before, according to Comscore.

While this weekend's crop of films weren't expected to compete with the same timeframe last year, when "Cap-



(DISNEY/PIXAR VIA AP)

In this image released by Disney/Pixar, Ian Lightfoot, voiced by Tom Holland, left, and Barley Lightfoot, voiced by Chris Pratt, appear in a scene from "Onward."

tain Marvel" was in release, revenue was down 60% from the same weekend last year.

Pixar films virtually always hold well for weeks, but "Onward" dropped 73% from its opening weekend. "The Hunt," which remounted its release after its debut was canceled last fall following a wave of deadly shootings, had hoped to do twice as well.

Most of Europe's cinemas have shuttered in recent days,

as have theaters in China, India, Lebanon and Kuwait. Those closures have already slashed international grosses. Health officials are urging for those who can stay home to do so, to help stymie the spread of the virus.

But the wide majority of North American theaters remained open for business over the weekend. The continent's two largest chains, AMC Theaters and Regal Cinemas, said

they wouldn't fill theaters to more than 50% capacity to facilitate social distancing. Others asked moviegoers to leave empty seats around them. All pledged to clean theaters in between screenings.

Other theaters opted to close completely, including many in New York. Of the roughly 5,800 theaters in the United States, about 100 were closed over the weekend.

Jim Orr, Universal's distri-

bution chief, said the industry was doing its best to navigate the unknown.

"We're still all working through it. The circuits are doing a great job of taking government mandates and applying it to their businesses the best they possibly can," Orr said. "This is a unique point in time in our industry and maybe in our nation. But we'll get to the other side of it, and the box office will come back

very healthy. It's just a matter of when that might be."

Health officials urged people to stay home and minimize social interaction, especially in states that have instituted bans on larger gatherings. California put a limit on gatherings of 250 people; New York set its ban at 500 people; Ohio banned gatherings of 100 people or more.

"With the worldwide coronavirus epidemic causing many domestic theater chains to go to reduced seating and many international territories to either completely or partially close all theaters, as well as creating uncertainty about going to crowded spaces, all titles have seen larger than expected drops," Disney said in a statement.

Much of the entertainment world has shut down. Broadway theaters, major museums and theme parks have closed their doors. Concerts have been called off. Festivals including South by Southwest in Austin, Texas, and the Tribeca Film Festival in New York have been canceled or delayed. Most live-action film and TV production has been put on hiatus.

Hollywood also has postponed most of its upcoming releases. Next week's most anticipated movie, "A Quiet Place Part 2," has been removed from the schedule. Other major releases, including Disney's "Mulan" and the James Bond film "Die Another Day" have been put off.

That means that even if movie theaters remain open in the coming weeks, they will have little to play. Theaters could potentially play older films to help them get by.

## Hollywood in uncharted territory weathering the virus

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—Coronavirus precautions were already popping up in Hollywood: "No handshakes or selfies" signs were posted outside the room where Vin Diesel was promoting his new movie. TV shows started taping without live audiences. South by Southwest, the sprawling film and music festival, was canceled outright.

That was before Wednesday night, when Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson told the world they had tested positive for coronavirus. By Thursday morning, everything had changed.

The entertainment industry went into full retreat. Productions were halted. Film releases, from "F9" to "Mulan," were delayed. More festivals were canceled. There was not a sector of the entertainment business left untouched by the unprecedented decisions made Thursday to try to slow the spread of the virus.

The Hanks news "really marked a turning point," said Richard Rushfield, the editor of the entertainment industry newsletter The Ankler.

Not only did it make the virus seem more real to some people, Rushfield said the fact that Hanks was shooting a movie at the time also had a business implication.

"It sunk in that all production was going to have to cease," he said.

"The Batman," starring Robert Pattinson, was the latest to announce it was suspending production on Saturday. Warner Bros. Pictures said it would be on hiatus for two weeks and "the studio will continue to monitor the situation closely"

Now everyone is trying to mitigate the damage and move forward, but there are challenges everywhere. There are crews who suddenly don't have jobs. Some up-and-coming filmmakers now have no festival platform to debut their work and no guarantee that they'll be accepted next year. Studios have spent big bucks on ads for movies that now won't hit theaters for six months or more. And frustrated theater owners, already in a precarious position, are wondering if they

can survive without blockbusters, or crowds.

"All my clients have been touched by this at this point in varying degrees," said veteran publicist Michele Robertson. "We're figuring out what are we able to do. Phoners? What's in-person and when? Basically, I've been on the phone a lot, but it's all been measured and forward thinking."

For some, it was too late to change course. Movies like Universal's "The Hunt," Sony's "Bloodshot" and the indie "Never Rarely Sometimes Always" are still opening in theaters this weekend. That's placed stars and filmmakers in the tricky position of promoting their films while also encouraging people to be safe.

"It's hard to encourage people to come, right, because you don't want to be selfish in the sense of 'I want you to come and have a good time.' But I also don't want to put you in a dangerous situation," said "Bloodshot" actress Eiza González last week. "It puts you in a really difficult situation."

For most people, the new

coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

Reese Witherspoon and Kerry Washington did interviews as planned Thursday for their Hulu series "Little Fires Everywhere," which has the distinction (and benefit) of being a show that audiences can watch from their home.

"It's hard to say, 'Oh, hey, watch a TV show. Maybe, it'll make it better.' We want to be very sincere about that. We're not trying to pitch our wares," Witherspoon said. "But I do think there is an important time for entertainment."

For delayed and upcoming releases, studios have gone into overdrive trying to navigate the new reality of quarantines, school closures and social distancing.

"We are all struggling to wrap our heads around this," said Lisa Schwartz, the co-president of IFC Films and Sundance Selects. "We're

getting on the phone every two hours with senior management discussing what's happening and trying to be as responsible and responsive as we can in the face of a lot of uncertainty."

IFC Films is pushing back the theatrical release of Hirokazu Kore-eda's "The Truth," with Catherine Deneuve, Juliette Binoche and Ethan Hawke. At the same time, it's also leveraging its own streaming service, IFC Films Unlimited, to provide in-home options for entertainment.

"It's been interesting to watch in the last two weeks an uptick in people seeking more in-home entertainment," Schwartz said, adding the company is tailoring its social advertising to reflect what people are talking about. "This week the conversation is about limiting travel and not being able to go to Europe, so we're going to do posts about our films like 'The Trip' and 'The Trip to Italy.' We're trying to remind people that there are ways to escape even if they are home-based."



# Academy of Country Music postpones awards show amid virus

## Trial of Robert Durst delayed for 3 weeks amid virus fears

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—A Los Angeles judge on Sunday postponed the murder trial of multimillionaire New York real estate heir Robert Durst for three weeks over fears of the transmission of the new coronavirus.

Superior Court Judge Mark E. Windham announced that the trial, which had been underway for six days and is expected to take five months, will stand adjourned until April 6.

On Friday, Windham had established a plan to have the 12 jurors and 12 alternates in the case use gallery seats to sit apart from one another in an effort to avoid virus transmission. But before the plan could be enacted, he decided to delay the proceedings instead.

The head judge in Los Angeles County has recommended that all trials in the county be delayed for 30 days where it is legally possible, and has ordered that no new jurors be summoned for the same period.

Durst is on trial for the killing of his friend Susan Berman in her home in December 2000. Prosecutors argued in opening statements that Durst shot Berman because she knew Durst had killed his wife, who disappeared in 1982. Durst has denied having any role in either death.

**NEW YORK (AP)**—The show won't go on for the Academy of Country Music, after all.

The academy said Sunday that it was postponing its annual awards show, which was to be held April 5 at the MGM Garden Arena in Las Vegas and televised on CBS, because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The plan now is to hold the show in September, at a date and venue to be determined.

The academy "went to great lengths to find a safe solution for the show to go on," said Damon Whiteside, academy CEO. The decision to postpone came after "constant conversations" with everyone involved, he said.

It's the latest in a wave of events that were due to draw big audiences to fall by the wayside, given health advice for people to keep their social



distance to avoid transmission. Keith Urban, Miranda Lambert, Elle King and Ashley McBryde were among the artists scheduled to perform on the show.

**AP PHOTO**  
This combination photo shows Keith Urban performing at the 52nd annual CMA Awards in Nashville, Tenn. on Nov. 14, 2018, left, and Miranda Lambert performing at the 54th annual Academy of Country Music Awards in Las Vegas on April 7, 2019.

While the coronavirus causes only mild symptoms such as fever or cough for most people, it can cause more severe illnesses, particularly among older adults and people with existing health problems.

The South By Southwest festival in Austin, Texas, was canceled over concerns of spreading the coronavirus, and the California-based music festivals Coachella and the country-themed Stagecoach are being postponed until the fall.

## Show goes on: DiDonato, Beczala sing opera from apartment

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Joyce DiDonato and Piotr Beczala made sure the show went on, albeit in an unusual format and venue—from the living room of DiDonato's New York City apartment.

The American mezzo-soprano and Polish tenor had been scheduled to star in Massenet's "Werther" at the Metropolitan Opera starting Monday. The Met's shutdown because of the coronavirus outbreak caused the cancellation of the first five of six scheduled performances through March 31.

Accompanied by Met assistant conductor Howard Watkins at the piano and principal harp Emmanuel Ceysen, the pair performed excerpts for nearly 90 minutes

Sunday that were streamed live on DiDonato's Facebook and Instagram pages.

Given that many artists have lost at least two months of income because of force majeure provisions in their contracts, they used the livestream to ask for donations for the American Guild of Musical Artists relief fund and Artist Relief Tree.

Beczala, singing the title role, was in a suit and open collar shirt, and DiDonato, as Charlotte, wore a black dress.

"Since we can't sing on Monday night, we thought let's get together in this salon, like they used to do in the old days, which we might have to do in the new days, too," she said.

"Just two of us," Beczala



(JORGE PARODI VIA AP)

From left to right: tenor Piotr Beczala, Metropolitan Opera assistant conductor Howard Watkins (at piano), soprano Joyce DiDonato and Metropolitan Opera Orchestra principal harp Emmanuel Ceysen perform excerpts of Massenet's "Werther" at DiDonato's apartment Sunday, March 15, 2020 in New York.

interjected.

"Who needs baritones and sopranos?" she added.

He grabbed a flower from a vase atop the upright piano, and they danced in the first act.

"Technically, this is not a Metropolitan Opera live in HD," she said. "This is literally an iPhone and a laptop."

Judging from the thousands of comments, the stream was watched by people around the world. One even wrote it was nice to hear no applause interrupting the third act following Werther's big aria, "Pourquoi me reveiller (Why do you awaken me)?"

"Everybody should have the chance to have a harp in their house at one time," she said, adding, "and a tenor—I meant Piotr."

## Well-meaning grandmother is criticized for helping too much

**DEAR ABBY:** My husband and I are not on the same page about helping with the grandkids. We moved here six years ago to be closer to my daughter, her husband and their two daughters. The older one is 9, and the younger is 6.

Although the 6-year-old has multiple physical challenges and developmental delays, our son-in-law thinks "we" babysit far too often. My intention is to help my daughter with the challenges that a special needs child presents to the family. Mostly, I am the one providing the care; my husband does the minimum.

Every time I agree to watch the children, I feel huge stress because I know my son-in-law will complain about it. It's tearing me apart. Thank you for listening. Just writing this helps.

HELPING IN THE EAST

**DEAR HELPING:** I agree that parenting a child with special needs is challenging. You are a loving, caring mother and grandmother, but this is something your daughter and her husband have to reach a meeting of the minds about. The last thing she needs is dissension in her household. Counseling for them might help your son-in-law understand that your daughter's health might be compromised if she does everything herself. Some sort of compromise about your level of involvement could be key.

As to your husband, I'm not sure what more you think he should be doing. He agreed to move closer to your daughter so you could help her. It has to have been disruptive for

him. Please give him points for that, because I do.

**DEAR ABBY:** I have a couple of weddings coming up, and I have a small dilemma. They are both in my husband's family and only a month apart. One is his brother's, and the other is his cousin's. My question is, can I wear the same dress to both weddings?

I normally don't care about what people think, but I also don't want to be the subject of ridicule or scorn at a family event. I'll also add, it's not about financial concerns. It's just that it's a beautiful dress, and I really don't see the point in going out and getting another fancy dress. I worry about pictures at both weddings. I guess I'm confused and could really use some advice.

BEAUTIFUL DRESS IN THE MIDWEST

**DEAR BEAUTIFUL DRESS:** You are not a Hollywood actress during awards season, who "must" have a radically different look for each ceremony. Your family weddings are special events, but there is no reason you can't use the dress you have in mind for both. If you're afraid it may cause a problem in wedding photos, consider accessorizing your dress differently for each one—gold jewelry for the first, silver for the second and a different colored shawl or wrap. I'm sure you can pull this off. Please write back and let me know.

**CONFIDENTIAL TO MY IRISH FRIENDS:**  
May you always have

## DEAR ABBY

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**  
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



A sunbeam to warm you  
Good luck to charm you  
And a sheltering angel  
So nothing can harm you.  
Laughter to cheer you  
Faithful friends near you  
And whenever you pray,  
Heaven to hear you.  
**HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY!**

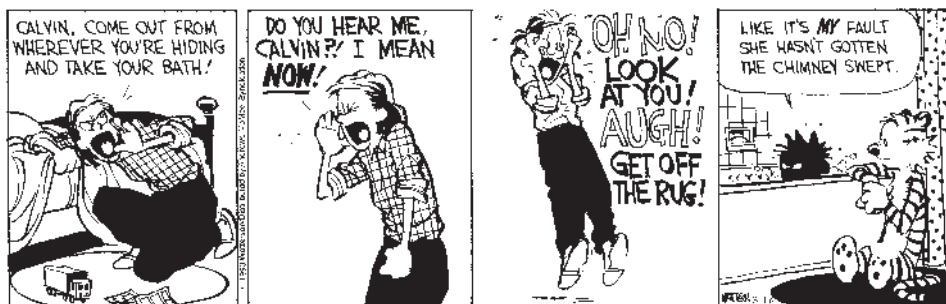
LOVE, ABBY

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)



# Pastimes

## Calvin and Hobbes



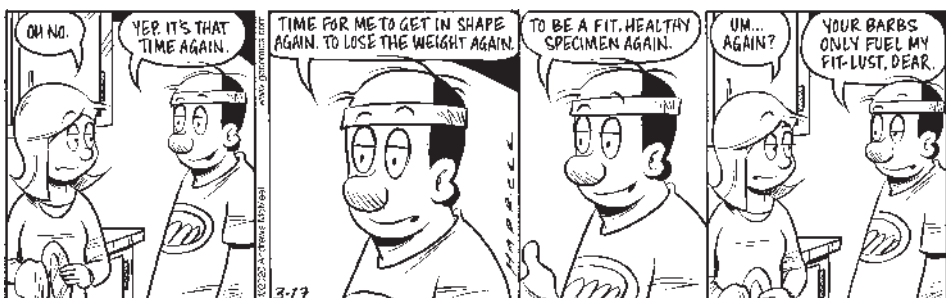
By Bill Waterson

## Garfield®



By Jim Davis

## Adam@home



By Bryan Basset

## The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy

## CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 Golden State sch.  
5 AAA job  
8 Alamo rival  
12 Frat letters  
13 Have debts  
14 "Candy is dandy" poet  
15 City on Lake Geneva  
17 El —  
18 Com-mand to Fido  
19 Airline to Sweden  
20 Slow, in music  
21 Have a bug  
22 Peanut butter brand  
23 "Captain Blood" star  
26 Bravery  
30 Withdraw gradually  
31 "Rah!"  
32 War god  
33 Bad mark

**DOWN**

35 Bracelet site  
36 Pinnacle  
37 "Nasty!"  
38 Rap star  
41 Nabokov novel  
42 ISP choice  
45 Earth Day subj.  
46 "The Hours" actress  
48 Fork prong  
49 Miner's find  
50 Deception  
51 Air freshener target  
52 Abysmal

**35 Calendar entry (Abbr.)**  
**21 "The Accidental Tourist" author**  
**22 Bliss**  
**23 Email subject line abbr.**  
**24 Shelter**  
**25 Orange veggie**  
**26 Persian, for one**  
**27 Noah's boat**  
**28 Solidify**  
**29 Compass pt.**  
**31 Shri! bark**  
**34 Sturgeon product**  
**35 "Super-food" berry**  
**37 Did nothing**  
**38 Trendy low-carb diet**  
**39 Battery fluid**  
**40 Taboo**  
**41 Mystique**  
**42 L-Q bridge**  
**43 Lose it**  
**44 On deck**  
**46 Task**  
**47 "Caught ya!"**

**Solution time: 22 mins.**

**Yesterday's answer 3-17**

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:** Mia Hamm, 48; Rob Lowe, 56; Gary Sinise, 65; Kurt Russell, 69.

**Happy Birthday:** Don't let anger or negativity be your downfall this year. Strive to see the good in everything and everyone. A positive attitude will help you discourage difficult encounters with people who can make your life difficult. Hard work, dedication and personal achievement should be your goals. A well-thought-out move will make you feel at ease. Your numbers are 8, 17, 22, 29, 38, 40, 44.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** A short trip, change of scenery or personal pick-me-up will offer insight into how you should move forward. Don't lose sight of your goal or let emotional anger throw you off. Do your own thing, and you will make an unexpected gain. \*\*\*

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** Do your best to initiate what you want to happen. A take-charge attitude will put you in a good position and help you gain respect and recognition. Offer dynamic suggestions and solutions, and you'll impress everyone you encounter. \*\*\*\*\*

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Avoid joint ventures, and don't let anyone handle your money or personal affairs. If you are smart and take matters into your own hands, a settlement, financial gain or gift will come your way. Listen, observe and handle issues yourself. \*\*\*

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** Consider what's available, and mull over your options and the long-term effects. Discuss what you feel your responsibilities should be and what you

want in return. Patience will pay off, and significant advantages will be yours. Bide your time. \*\*\*

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Take time to understand what's happening before you go on a rant or make a decision. It's the time taken to make sure you get things right that will pay the highest dividends in the end. Laziness will make you look bad. \*\*\*

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** Live in and enjoy the moment. Sit back and relax with friends, and take part in things that will stimulate your mind. Love and romance are gaining momentum. Take a positive step forward. \*\*\*\*\*

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** Anger won't solve anything, so avoid getting coerced into a battle. Socialize with people who make you smile and think and bring out the best in you. Do something that eases stress and makes you feel and look fantastic. \*\*

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Plan to do something special with someone you love. A positive change in attitude will encourage you to try something that you've been reluctant to pursue in the past. A desire for change will capture your heart and lead to intriguing considerations. \*\*\*\*\*

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** Keep your head down, your focus on what you have to complete and your mind off petty annoyances and people who are manipulative or deceitful. When faced with pressure or negativity, your best option is to be straightforward. \*\*\*

## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Try something different. Update your appearance, get involved in something you find fascinating or make more memories with someone you love. Express your feelings, and it will be easier to get others to side with you. Romance is encouraged. \*\*\*

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** Do something relaxing to put your mind at ease. Refuse to jump into something because someone else does. Make decisions geared toward your interests and goals. Time is on your side, so put everything in place before you make a move. \*\*\*

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** The choice will be yours. You can close and open a new chapter if you deal with someone from your past or a person who has the clout to help you get ahead. \*\*\*\*

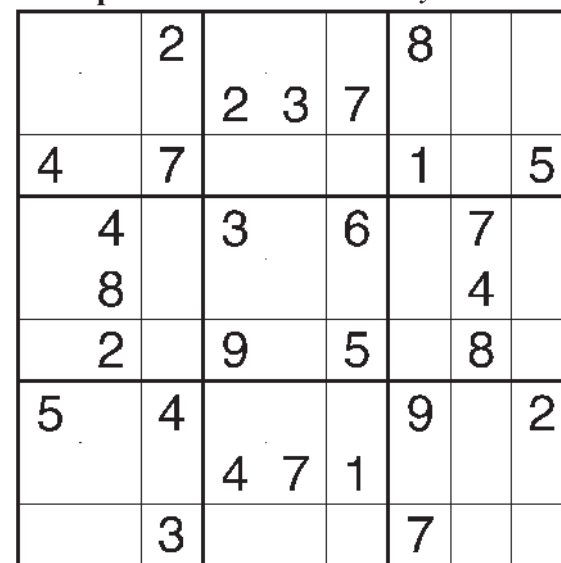
**Birthday Baby:** You are responsive, sensitive and dedicated. You are unpredictable and opportunistic.

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## SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

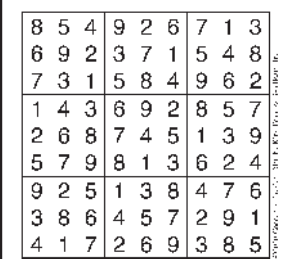


Difficulty Level ★★

3/17

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer



Not Truly Level A

## WONDERWORD

By DAVID CUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

LEPRECHAUNS

Solution: 6 letters

L F P H S I R I T S E H C I R  
E I A I R F I B M R A H C E E  
G X T D R D E O C B C A V E T  
E I R E A A V I U E M O N G I  
N N I N R I I C H F L O W E R  
D G C D E A K N M C R E W O P  
L E K S H L T N B Y S H O E S  
O F O R E S T U A O T I N Y M  
G A R D E N I F R R W H M U S  
R I Y R O T S W A E P A S T F  
E R U R A L A M K R G I R H E  
E Y K C U L O O A I C O X G I  
N L S N I O C H C E L A T I L  
Y S A T N A F F O L K L O R E  
G R E M L I N I L B O G S B B

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3/17

Beard, Beliefs, Bright, Buckle, Cave, Charm, Clover, Coat, Coins, Craft, Dance, Fairy, Fantasy, Fixing, Flower, Folklore, Forest, Garden, Gnome, Goblin, Gold, Green, Gremlin, Harp, Hide, Irish, Legend, Literature, Lucky, Magic, Male, Mischief, Moon, Movies, Music, Myth, Patrick, Pixie, Power, Prank, Rainbow, Riches, Rural, Shoes, Sprite, Story, Tale, Tiny, Troll, Wish

Yesterday's Answer: Summary  
To purchase THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 40, 42, and 44 through 58 order online at [www.WonderWordBooks.com](http://www.WonderWordBooks.com).

## STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

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# 49ers out of Brady sweepstakes, 2 teams remain

**CALIFORNIA**—The number of potential suitors for Tom Brady in free agency is dwindling.

Not long after Ryan Tannehill and the Titans agreed to a massive contract extension Sunday, thus squashing all Brady-to-Tennessee talk, NBC Sports' Chris Simms reported the San Francisco 49ers are also out of the Brady sweepstakes.

Simms notes the 49ers were Brady's "No. 1 choice," but San Francisco ultimately declined to pursue the six-time Super Bowl champion. Instead, they'll stick with Brady's former backup, Jimmy Garoppolo.

According to Simms, the two teams still in the running to sign Brady are the New England Patriots and Tampa Bay Buccaneers. On Wednesday, it was reported the Bucs were "going all in" to make Brady their new quarterback.

If true, that means we can also cross the Las Vegas Raiders and Los Angeles Chargers off the list. Both teams were rumored to be frontrunners to sign Brady in free agency.

As long as the NFL doesn't move the start of the new league year amid the coronavirus pandemic, Brady will become an unrestricted free agent on March 18.

## 17-game regular season approved

By a close vote, with some 500 union members not participating, NFL players approved a new labor agreement with the league. It features a 17-game regular season, higher salaries, increased roster sizes and larger pensions for current and former players.

The deal, which runs through the 2030 season, was accepted by the 32 team



In this Oct. 6, 2019 file photo, New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady (12) works under pressure in the pocket against Washington Redskins defensive end Matthew Ioannidis (98) during the first half of an NFL game in Landover, Md.

owners last month. The NFL Players Association's membership spent the last week voting on the 439-page document after its executive board narrowly rejected it by a 6-5 vote, and the player representatives voted 17-14 in favor, with one abstention.

Clearly, there was some strong player opposition to this collective bargaining agreement, though. Many stars, including Aaron Rodgers, Russell Wilson, J.J. Watt and Todd Gurley, spoke out against it. The total vote, among the nearly 2,500 union

members who participated, was 1,019-959. Ratification required a simple majority—a results were announced Sunday—and there could be lasting resentment among union members, given how close the vote was.

"Can't believe we agreed to that lol," Colts tight end Eric Ebron tweeted. "We can only play this game for so long and y'all didn't want everything we could get out of it? ... 2030 y'all do better."

Ravens cornerback Marlon Humphrey expressed displeasure about the turnout for voting.

"Around 500 players didn't even vote on the new CBA ...," he tweeted. "It's good and bad to this deal. I could see why anyone would vote either way. I just think it's amazing guys don't even care."

Almost immediately, players were urging unity, particularly in the face of the criticism from within their ranks about approving the deal.

"The democratic process has played itself out," tweeted Eagles safety Malcolm Jenkins, one of the most influential voices in the union. "We must be committed to unify-

ing our current and former members. While I don't agree with the decision because of its negative impacts on some current and former players, I do respect our process and will push forward accordingly."

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, not surprisingly, praised the players' acceptance of the new CBA.

"We are pleased that the players have voted to ratify the proposed new CBA, which will provide substantial benefits to all current and retired players, increase jobs, ensure continued progress on player

safety, and give our fans more and better football," Goodell said in a statement. "We appreciate the tireless efforts of the members of the Management Council Executive Committee and the NFLPA leadership, both of whom devoted nearly a year to detailed, good faith negotiations to reach this comprehensive, transformative agreement."

After discussions with the union during the day, the NFL sent a memo to all teams Sunday night that the league will open the 2020 NFL business season on Wednesday, as scheduled, with free agency and trades. A delay had been considered a possibility given league restrictions on travel as a safeguard against the new coronavirus.

There was no immediate word on timing and potential format changes for the draft, scheduled for Las Vegas from April 23-25, something that was also expected to be discussed by the NFL and NFLPA.

A 17-game schedule won't happen before the 2021 season. The mechanics for an uneven number of games—neutral sites or which teams get nine home games—will be worked out in the interim.

Extending the season was a nonissue with the players in 2011, when the current 10-year deal was finalized after a 4 1/2 month lockout. It has upset many of them as it will become a reality in another season or so.



## PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla.

(AP)—For the last 75 years, the golf landscape never changed. March brought anticipation of azaleas and Amen Corner, of the drive down Magnolia Lane and the chase for a green jacket.

The annual road to the Masters took a major detour—but not a dead end, like other tournaments—when Augusta National said the Masters would be postponed because of increasing risks with the new coronavirus.

It was expected, but no less jarring, even as the Masters joined other big sporting events that were suspended (NBA), delayed (Major League Baseball) or canceled (NCAA basketball tournament).

Xander Schauffele was quick to find hope.

## Road to the Masters leads nowhere as golf shuts down

"Well, postponed is a comforting word," Schauffele said. "Canceled is another."

Augusta National offered no details except for Chairman Fred Ridley saying he hopes the postponement puts the club in the best position to safely host the Masters "at some later date."

The announcement capped off 24 hours that began with hope golf could be played without fans and ended with the reality that it had to follow along with other sports and step away.

Even the Masters.

PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan said his "gut-wrenching" decision to cancel the rest of The Players Championship this week and the next three tournaments on the schedule was based largely on

Orlando's theme parks shutting down and travel for the international players.

"Even though we have a safe environment and we've done all the right things, we can't proceed," Monahan said. "It's not right to proceed."

That got little argument from the players, who suspected this was coming.

Rory McIlroy, the world's No. 1 player, preached the importance of everyone getting tested for the virus and saying golf would have no choice but to shut down if anyone—a player, caddie, support staff—tested positive.

That was on Thursday night, after he closed with three straight birdies. He went to bed before the tour's decision to shut down golf and woke

up Friday to several text messages that left him wondering when he would tee it up again.

"You're obviously going to still keep playing golf, but you're going out there practicing and not knowing what you're practicing for," McIlroy said as he headed into the TPC Sawgrass clubhouse to clean out his locker.

The PGA Tour has canceled four tournaments, one in the Dominican Republic. The LPGA Tour, which already lost three tournaments on its Asia Swing, said it was postponing its next three events in Arizona and California, the last one the first major championship of the year.

The next tournament on the European Tour schedule is in the south of Spain at the end

of April.

It's not unusual for players to have a month off with nowhere to play, just not in the heart of the season.

"This is obviously new territory," said J.T. Poston, who was anticipating his first time playing the Masters. "I can't remember the last time I didn't really know when I was going to play my next golf tournament or when I didn't have a golf tournament that I could look forward to playing."

McIlroy's coach was planning to fly from Ireland next week so they could prepare for the Masters, the major keeping him from the career Grand Slam. That's been scrapped. All that's on McIlroy's immediate agenda is getting tested for the virus.

Bernd Wiesberger of Austria was trying to get the last flight to Vienna. He left before the Masters was postponed, which was just as well. Wiesberger figured he would not have been able to return to the U.S. to play.

Scrapping the Players Championship also was a blow to the tour because it's the biggest event—our Super Bowl," Monahan said—of the 44 tournaments it operates. Because only one round was played, the \$15 million purse was to be cut in half and distributed evenly among the 144 players—\$52,083 each, unofficial money.

That doesn't include C.T. Pan, who withdrew a few hours before his tee time to reduce the risk of catching the virus.

U.S. Open champion Gary Woodland was among those who felt it would have looked bad if the tour had kept playing.



# NBA eyes mid-June return, with no fans



**NEW YORK**—It could be a long time before we're seeing NBA games again. And even longer if we want to see them in person.

As the Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends not holding events of more than 50 people for at least eight weeks, a group of NBA owners and executives believe the best-case scenario for the league is a mid-June return date with no fans in attendance, according to ESPN's Adrian Wojnarowski.

The league is also reportedly scouting for possibly arena dates through August, signaling we might be looking at a delayed NBA Finals.

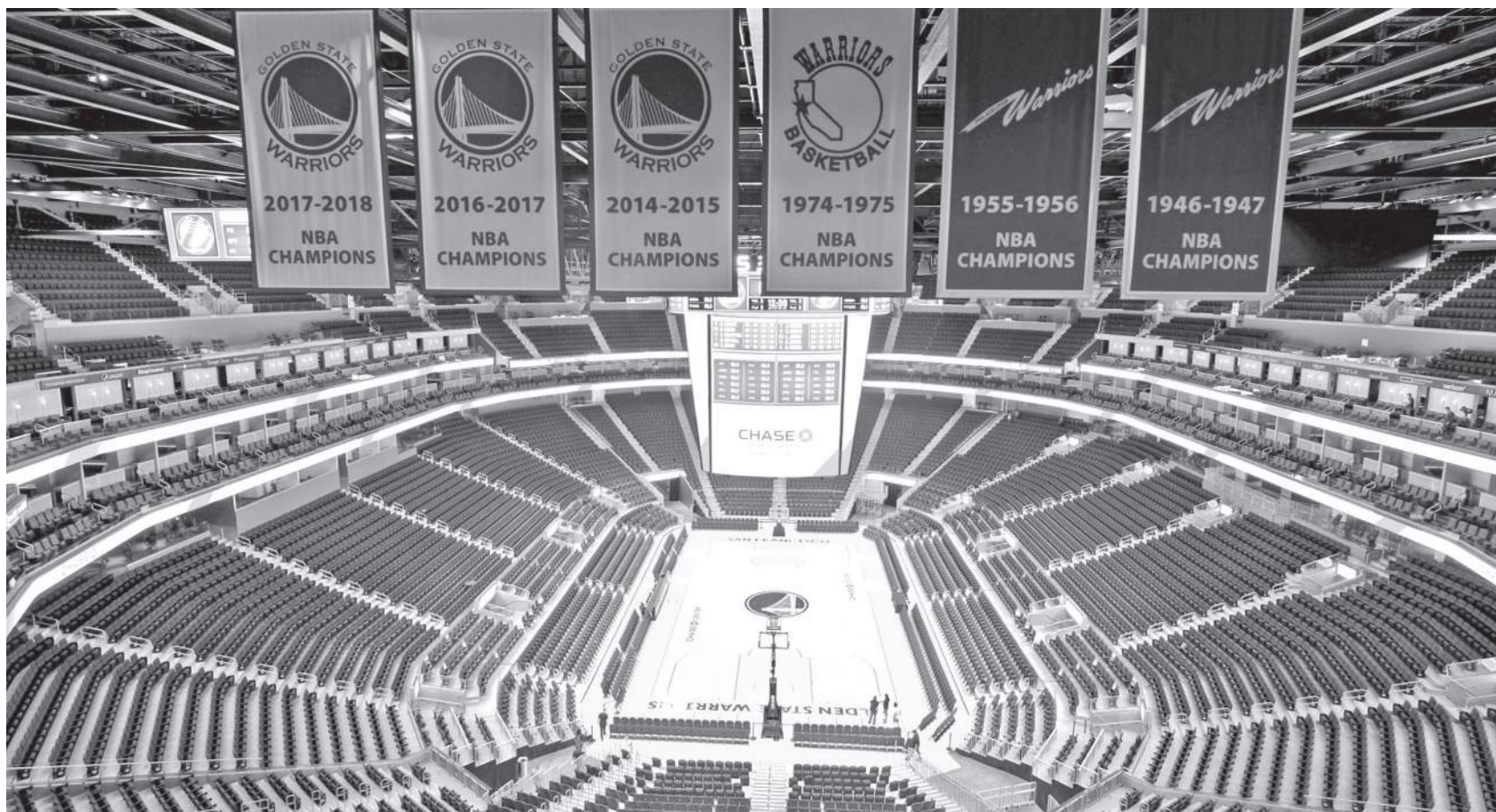
CDC recommendation of no events of 50-plus people for next two months comes as a number of NBA owners and executives increasingly believe a best case scenario is a mid-to-late June return to play -- with no fans. League's scouting for possible arena dates all the way thru August.

The NBA has previously announced that it would re-evaluate its hiatus in 30 days.

Additionally, Wojnarowski reports that the NBA will soon provide financial projections to owners on lost revenues based on three different scenarios: shutting down the season; re-starting the season no fans; and playing postseason games with fans.

Whatever happens, the losses will reportedly be reflected in next year's salary cap.

For now, the reported working plan is for games to return without fans and in potentially smaller venues. Teams have reportedly been asked to provide the league potential dates at venues like team practice facilities. Such a measure would



The Golden 1 Center empties out after the NBA basketball game between the New Orleans Pelicans and Sacramento Kings was postponed at the last minute in Sacramento, Calif., Wednesday, March 11, 2020.

likely make the sight of a game played in enormous, empty arenas a little less jarring.

## Players told they can leave town

In yet another indication that the NBA will be gone for a while, the league has reportedly told its teams that players are allowed to leave their market.

The NBA has informed its 30 teams that, effective Monday, players are able to travel out of market with consultation from their respective teams.

That expectation of the NBA goes even farther than what the CDC recommended on Sunday.

"Large events and mass gatherings can contribute to the spread of COVID-19 in

the United States via travelers who attend these events and introduce the virus to new communities. Examples of large events and mass gatherings include conferences, festivals, parades, concerts, sporting events, weddings, and other types of assemblies. These events can be planned not only by organizations and communities but also by individuals. Therefore, CDC, in accordance with its guidance for large events and mass gatherings, recommends that for the next 8 weeks, organizers (whether groups or individuals) cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more throughout the United States," CDC said.

Such a measure isn't a sur-

prise given the spread and pervasiveness of the latest coronavirus outbreak, and you can imagine sports leagues will at least factor in the CDC's advice before starting up their seasons again.

## \$500M losses in ticket revenue if season canceled

Nobody knows what happens next with the NBA season. Maybe it starts back up again, maybe it goes on much longer.

And maybe the entire season and playoffs are canceled.

If that worst-case scenario plays out, it's going to hit the NBA hard financially, in a season it's already taken a several hundred million dollar hit from the controversy

with China back during the preseason.

How big a hit? Maybe half a billion dollars. NBC's Tom Haberstroh did some back-of-the-envelope math on just how much gate revenue alone the NBA could lose if there are no more games.

As a rule of thumb, the source said, the NBA makes an average of \$1.2 million in gate revenue per regular season game and \$2 million for each playoff game. With 259 of 1,230 regular season games remaining, that means roughly \$300 million of ticket revenue lost if fans couldn't purchase tickets. Over the past decade, on average, there have been 83 playoff games in each postseason, which would lead to another

loss of about \$166 million.

That's nearly \$500 million in estimated lost ticket revenue if the NBA doesn't allow fans to attend the full slate of games.

Gate revenue varies widely from arena to arena. There are some smaller markets where the gate revenue number is closer to \$500,000 a game (or lower some nights), while the Warriors are estimated to make \$3.5 million a game or more in the new Chase Center.

Haberstroh's numbers are just gate revenue, it does not include money from sales of jerseys, foam fingers, and other team merchandise. It does not get into money the arena makes on sales of beer and roast beef sandwiches (some of which can kick back to the league).

## March Sadness: No brackets and no knowing what might've been

For all those who dreamed the impossible—making it a whole month without getting a single game wrong in the bracket—this is your year.

Everything else about the NCAA Tournament that won't happen this season—from Selection Sunday, to the jaw-dropping bracket busters and buzzer beaters, to the Sweet 16 to the Final Four? Call it March Sadness.

Before fears about the coronavirus scrubbed sports for the foreseeable future, Sunday was supposed to be the Big Reveal—the day when Americans gathered around a TV for an hour to watch ... drumroll ... a college basketball schedule being released.

It's so much better than it sounds.

It was supposed to be the day to imagine the possibilities: all the tantalizing matchups, the upsets-in-the-makings, the favorites, and, of course, the underdogs—so many underdogs—that would pop up on the 68 lines to set the table for America over the next three weeks.

It was supposed to be the day to kick off a rite of spring, and a rite of passage—a three-week college hoops spectacular that allows people to set aside their differences and replace them with other ones. It was an event designed every bit as much for the hard-core basketball fan as for the clueless neophyte who can't tell a pick-and-roll from a personal foul. It was for anyone with ten bucks to blow in an office

pool, or who really liked picking teams that wear red, or was quite sure a Blue Devil would vanquish a Red Raider if the actual team mascots went to war.

It was ... something we're going to miss this year in our coronavirus-infected country—a year in which we really could use an escape, but will be stuck watching reruns of "Blue Bloods" instead of games between blue bloods.

It was supposed to be a year for Kansas to walk in as the No. 1 overall seed and have two stories told at the same time. The Jayhawks could be staring at serious sanctions from the NCAA, which has targeted them with the dreaded "lack of institutional control"

for a series of alleged recruiting violations. They were also being led by Udoka Azubuike, the big man who left Nigeria when he was a kid for a better opportunity to play basketball. He was hoping to be reunited with his mom at the Final Four in Atlanta.

Would the Jayhawks have made it to Atlanta? Who was ready to step in if they didn't?

A top candidate for Most Inspirational would've come from Dayton. The struggling Ohio city was shattered by a mass shooting last summer. Trey Landers, a senior guard at the 11,000-student Catholic school, was among those who escaped from a bar as a gunman approached with an

assault-style weapon. "Our team is helping pull the city together a little bit. ... It's bigger than us," Landers said recently. The Flyers, at 29-2 and ranked third in The Associated Press poll, were headed for a No. 1 seed.

Rutgers also was on the verge of making history. One of the most downtrodden sports programs in America was projected to make the tournament for the first time since 1991. "We would have won some games, too," coach Steve Pikiell said. Now, all the Scarlet Knights can do is wait 'til next year.

Michigan State would've been in the mix, as always. Its star player, Cassius Winston, would've been the emotional center of any deep run by the Spartans. His brother, Zachary,

stepped in front of a moving train and was killed instantly last November. "I lost a piece of my heart, but you guys you keep me going," Winston told Spartans fans shortly after his brother's death.

The Pac-12's best player, Payton Pritchard of Oregon, was trying to bookend his trip to the Final Four as a freshman with another as a senior. Speaking of the Ducks, was there any more dominating player in the country than Sabrina Ionescu? She had 26 career triple-doubles and finished her career with more than 2,000 points, 1,000 rebounds and 1,000 assists. But as is the case with the men, the party will end for the women before they get their chance to shine on the big stage.





# 7 Saipan runners make 10K podium



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Kosuke Sato paces a small group of runners, including Ken Song, left, as they head back to the American Memorial Park to finish their respective races in last Saturday's Saipan Marathon.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Keith Longuski keeps a steady pace as he runs back to the American Memorial Park en route to a third place finish overall in the men's 10K event.

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**  
roselyn\_monroyo@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Four Saipan runners made it to the Top 6 overall in the men's division of the 10K event in last Saturday's 2020 Saipan Marathon, while three earned the same recognition in the women's race.

Keith Longuski was the fastest Saipan finisher in the 10K event, which started and ended at the American Memorial Park with a turnaround point across the former Saipan Mayor's Office in Beach Road, after submitting 38:36. South Korea's Sungchan Park topped the race with his 37:12, while Japan's Kosuke Hara came in at second (37:41). Completing the Top 6 are Saipan's Kosuke Sato (40:01), Ken Song (40:16), and Whit Altizer (41:24).

In the women's division, Saipan's Noriko Jim placed second behind South Korea's Yunmi Lee, as the former clocked in at 43:50 against the latter's 42:54. Two other Saipan runners joined Jim in the podium with Kaithlyn Chavez ranked

fourth (49:35) and Ayano Braxton placing sixth (50:26). South Koreans Yoon Young Kang (48:29), and Jun Kyung Choi (49:44) rounded out the Top 6.

Meanwhile, young Saipan runners dominated the 5K event.

Fourteen-year-old Jim Kurt Maniago was the top finisher in the men's 5K course, as he completed the run from and to AMP (with a turnaround point near Saipan Computer Service in Beach Road) in 20:22.

Five of the Top 6 finishers in the men's 5K are in the U15 age group with 13-year-old Markus Toves (21:21) and Rex Pixley (21:36) and 14-year-old Ariel Narvaez (21:39) and Garrett Weaver (21:40) joining the elite group, which also had Ronald Villafria (22:09).

In the women's 5K, 19-year-old Krizel Mae Tuazon led the finishers list after posting 27:24. Rounding out the Top 6 were her fellow Saipan runners Miaozhuo Wang (28:16), Jinie Thompson (29:09), Tiana Hix (29:55), Harumi Suzuki (30:49), and Esther Xu (30:55).

## SPORTS

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Ricky Castro made the announcement a few hours after Guam confirmed it has three COVID-19 cases late afternoon last Sunday. Tagaman was originally slated for this Saturday and the new schedule has yet to be discussed.

Also set for this weekend is the playoff round of the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic Boys Middle School Volleyball League, but the competition is halted, as all activities under the PSS Athletics Program have been canceled until further notice.

"In an effort to mitigate the dangers associated with the COVID-19, all PSS Athletic Programs are canceled until further notice," program director Nick Gross said.

Also called off was the meeting this week for the

All Schools Track and Field Championship, which is scheduled to kick off its qualifying events later this month.

The 2020 Northern Marianas College Foundation Golf Tournament set for this Saturday at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort was suspended, too.

"We want to ensure the health and safety of our community during this time, and part of that means preventing big gatherings and canceling large scale events," NMC interim president Frankie Eliptico said. "We'd like to thank our golfers and sponsors for their understanding and continued support for the college."

Meanwhile, Northern Marianas Islands Football Association, which oversees the 2020 NMIFA Spring Youth League, 2020 Dove Women's Spring League, and 2020 Spring Men's M-League, has suspended matches in all three

competitions and other activities since last night.

"Due to COVID-19 pandemic concerns, the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association is suspending all leagues and other soccer related activities including the national team program training until further notice," NMIFA said in a press statement.

The decision was made in compliance with the directives of the CNMI government and the local and federal agencies involved in the effort to prevent the spread of the virus and ensure the safety of the islands' residents.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, last Sunday evening, ordered the closure of government offices and non-essential government functions until further notice, while the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is urging people to cancel or postpone events that draw crowds, including sports com-

petitions, to contain the virus.

Besides the regular matches in the three various leagues, NMIFA is also suspending its soccer programs for schools (P.E. Support, Interscholastic Soccer League, and Junior Soccer Academy Training).

Other sports events/competitions that are suspended indefinitely are the JP Hero Run, One Pacific Promotional Basketball League 2020, and Bridge Capital Tennis Classic, while Saipan Swim Club's practice sessions are also on hold.

Trench Tech Gym and Trench Tech Purebred JiuJitsu Academy are closed, too according to owner and founder Cuki Alvarez.

"We must be pro active and look out for the best interest and safety of our members, staff, and most especially our family. Preventative measures are your first line of defense," Alvarez said.

## Olympic torch relay in Greece suspended

**ATHENS, Greece (AP)**—The Greek Olympic committee suspended the rest of its torch relay on Friday because of the unexpectedly large crowd that gathered to watch despite repeated requests for the public to stay away to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

The committee said a large crowd had gathered to watch the flame for the Tokyo Olympics pass through the southern Greek town of Sparta. The flame for the Tokyo Olympics was lit Thursday at the birthplace of the games in Ancient Olympia in a pared-down ceremony.

"(We took) the difficult but essential decision to cancel the rest of the program of the flame relay on Greek territory," the committee said.

The decision was taken in coordination with the health ministry and the International Olympic Committee, it said.

The handover of the Olympic Flame to the Tokyo organizing committee will go ahead as scheduled on March 19 at the stadium in Athens where the first modern Olympics were held in 1896.

No spectators will be allowed to attend that ceremony, Tokyo officials said in a

statement, but they are continuing their plans for a torch relay in Japan.

"In line with the counter-measure policy set by the national government, we will work closely with all municipalities and related organizations in Japan to ensure the Olympic torch relay safely begins on March 26," organizers said.

Meanwhile, as the IOC attempts to keep the 2020 Olympics on schedule, many of the events that determine who would compete in Tokyo have been postponed or canceled.

Here is the status of U.S. or world qualifying in many of the Olympic disciplines.

In athletics, the U.S. Olympic track and field trials are still scheduled for June 19-28 in Eugene, Oregon. Other countries use a variety of methods, including trials, world rankings, and appointment based on results.

In baseball, four countries—Israel, Mexico, South Korea and host Japan—are in the six-team field. The final two spots are to be determined by tournaments that were postponed: An Americas qualifier in Arizona has been indefinitely postponed, and a last-chance qualifying tournament in Taiwan slated for April is now scheduled for June 17-21.

## KHS

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MHS (3:21.10).

For the 1,000m event, Kagman's 6:32.57 in the finals gave the team a comfortable win over SSHS (6:46.49) and MHS (6:51.67). In the prelims, the Ayuyus (6:46.54) had a nearly nine-second lead over the Dolphins (6:54.75) and almost 10 seconds versus the Manta Rays (6:56.37).

Joining KHS' boys crew in the co-ed races were Joan Weita, Alisa Gatharngeg, Davin and Erin Kim, Armani Adkins, Megan Barnes, Wallis Bai, and Danika Tagabuel. Aldan and Tarkong also coached the Lady Ayuyus along with Momoko Halstead.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation official Justin Andrew takes a photo of the Marianas High School paddlers as they make a turn during the 1,000m finals in the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Race Series last Saturday in the waters off Kilili Beach.





49ers out of Brady sweepstakes, 2 teams remain

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NBA eyes mid-June return, with no fans

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

# KHS paddlers triumph

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Kagman High School paddlers make a turn during the 1,000m finals in the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Race Series last Saturday in the waters off Kilili Beach.



By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
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REPORTER

ter Aldan and Jason Tarkong.

Meanwhile, KHS also took the championship in the co-ed division, as it collected 80

points from the three legs and the finale.

In the 500m prelims, the Ayuyus 3:05.59 defeated the

3:13.41 and 3:16.79 of the Manta Rays and Dolphins, respectively. In the finals, Kagman had a slower time

(3:12.89), but it still finished ahead of SSHS (3:14.91) and

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Kagman High School emerged as the undisputed champion in the boys division of the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Race Series that wrapped up last Saturday before all sports events in the CNMI were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ayuyus, who ruled the first three legs of the competition, capped their dominance in the division after topping the double-point finale last weekend. Kagman prevailed in the preliminary and final races in the 500m and 1,000m events in the waters off Kilili Beach to earn 40 more points, bringing the team's total to 85 or nearly double than the output of runner-up Saipan Southern High School (49) and way ahead of Marianas High School (14).

In the 500m prelims, Kagman timed in at 2:50.53, nearly six seconds ahead of SSHS (2:56.47), while MHS clocked in at 3:03.62. In the finals, there was a close battle between the Ayuyus and the Manta Rays with the former



posting 2:53.23 against the latter's 2:53.76. The Dolphins were ranked

third anew after recording 3:34.92.

In the 1,000m race, Kagman checked in at 6:16.01 in the prelims and has a faster time in the finals—6:14.36. Saipan Southern had a better prelims time (6:19.38), as it logged 6:31.63 in the finals, while MHS suffered the same fate after registering 6:54.10 in the first race and 7:19.65 in the finale.

The champion team of Kagman is made up of paddlers Iverson Santos, Koen Kabiriel, Elbert and Jodi Pinaula, Kenneth Kaipat, Jericho Jones, Noah Mesa, Jacoby Cabrera, Christian Achas, David Igisomar, Andrew Camacho, and Harry Moses and coaches Pe-



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Pacific Hardware's Alex Ocampo, third left, tries to hang on to the ball, as he is hounded by Napa's Ivan Devero, right, and Kelvin Fitial, second left, during an earlier game in the One Pacific caging, which has suspended its matches at the Civic Center Court indefinitely.

## Sports at a standstill

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
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REPORTER

From a busy season into no competition, indefinitely.

Announcements on the suspension of sports tournaments and activities on island were made one after another

in response to the COVID-19 crisis, which has already hit neighboring Guam.

Tagaman Triathlon was first on the list of postponed events, as Triathlon Association of the CNMI president

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Matansa Football Club, left, and Kanoa players battle for the ball during their co-ed U12 division game in the 2020 NMIFA Spring Youth League early this month at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Kobleville. The league is on hold until further notice due to the COVID-19 pandemic.